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BIOGRAPHY

OF THE SIGNERS TO THE

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

SECOND EDITION,

REVISED, IMPROVED, AND ENLARGED.

VOLUME III.

[By John Sanderson]

PHILADELPHIA:
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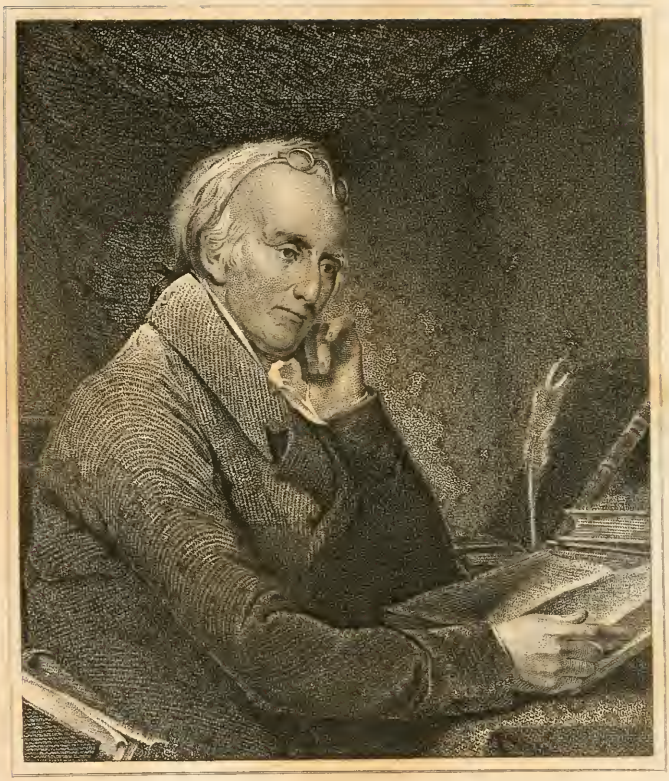

BENJAMIN RUSH

Engraved by J.B.Longacre from a

Painting by Sully.

BENJAMIN RUSH.

Benjamin Rush was born in the township of Byberry, about twelve miles to the north-east of Philadelphia, on the twenty-fourth of December, 1745, on part of a farm, originally consisting of five hundred acres, which had belonged to his great grandfather, captain John Rush. The latter was of English birth and descent, and had served with credit in the army of Cromwell, as a captain of horse, but being a republican and displeased with the restoration of the monarchy, he emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1683. He had been personally known in the civil wars to Oliver Cromwell. One day, seeing his mare come into the camp without him, Cromwell supposed he had been killed, and lamented him by saying, "he had not left a better officer behind him." His sword, his watch, and his bible, are still in possession of his family in Pennsylvania. He died in 1699, on his farm at Byberry, at the age of about eighty, having been the father of ten children. No other account of the parentage of Dr. Rush has been preserved that merits a particular notice. The occupations of infant colonies are usually of no great interest, affording neither allurements to vice, nor very frequent opportunities of distinction.

Having lost his father at six years of age, the care of his education and that of a younger brother devolved solely upon

On this, as on other occasions. he insured the particular attention of his teachers by incessant application to study. He relates himself, that during the whole of the six years of his pupilage under Dr. Redman, he could enumerate not more than two days of interruption from business; an example, which. to many who are now treading upon the footsteps of this illustrious model, may furnish a theme of salutary reflection. It is indeed but an additional illustration of a rule without exception, that no man can become wise and distinguished but by the combined influence of genius and industry. Many strange tales have been told, to flatter pride or excuse indolence, of eminent and great men who have obtained their laurels without labour, and with the same probability we might add the history of others who have acquired agility of limbs without exercise, or muscular strength without nutriment.

The books which he read with predilection during his preparatory studies, were the writings of Hippocrates, Sydenham, and Boerhaave; the aphorisms of the first he translated from Greek into English. In addition to his reading, he attended a course of public lectures on medicine by Dr. Shippen, the first that were delivered in the British colonies. He began about this time to accumulate such occurrences and observations, as appeared to him worthy of being preserved, in a common-place book; a source from which he afterwards drew much useful information, in the course of his medical practice and lectures, and to which at the age of fifty years he referred as exhibiting the only record existing of the malignant fever of Philadelphia of 1762.

In 1766, having passed through the elementary grades of medicine with such opportunities as his country afforded him. and aspiring to still greater advantages, he went to Edinburgh, at that time the most noted medical school of Europe.

where, after two years attendance upon the public lectures and hospitals, he obtained the degree of Doctor of Medicine. On this occasion his thesis. *de coctione ciborum in ventriculo,* according to the usage of the place, was presented and defended in the Latin language. The experiments made by him, in proof of his arguments, were extremely bold and adventurous. His reasoning itself displayed abilities, rare even among the pupils of that celebrated school. The style was correct and elegant; Dr. Ramsay, who was among the best classical scholars of our country, and who knew Dr. Rush well, says of this thesis, that it was "written in classical Latin;" and adds, "I have reason to believe without the help of a *grinder*, for it bears the characteristic marks of the peculiar style of its author."

During his residence at Edinburgh, Dr. Rush was commissioned to negotiate with Dr. Witherspoon of Paisley, in Scotland, his acceptance of the presidency of Princeton college: he had declined this office, to which he had been appointed by the trustees, and it is in some degree to the address of Dr. Rush that the accomplishment of this event is ascribed; an event which procured him an invaluable friend throughout life, conferred honour upon the seminary to which he owed his instruction, and contributed in no small degree to the advancement of the literature and science of our country.

From Edinburgh Dr. Rush visited London, where he passed the winter of 1768, in attendance upon the hospitals and medical lectures of that metropolis. The succeeding summer he spent with great advantage in Paris, and returned in the autumn of 1769 to his native country.

Thus qualified, he fixed his residence in the city of Philadelphia, and entered upon the career of his profession; in which he had to encounter, at the outset, a competition with physicians of a long established reputation. We find him,

however, even in the first years of his practice, associated with such men as Drs. Shippen, Morgan, Bond and Kuhn, as professor in the medical college of Philadelphia; sustaining with them a successful rivalry, or assisting, in the occurrence of the most intricate and dangerous diseases, at their professional consultations.

To a judgment prepared by a far more various knowledge than was usual among his contemporary physicians, he added most of those shining qualities and exterior accomplishments, which bring out the more solid advantages into conspicuous and prominent relief. By the affability of his manners he was soon considered in Philadelphia as the ornament and delight of all the companies he frequented, and was regarded with extreme partiality and admiration; all which contributed greatly to his professional reputation and success. By the same conciliating arts, he also gained the good will of his fellow practitioners, who favoured by friendly offices, rather than obstructed, the success of his enterprises. Besides the improvement of amiable manners and professional skill which foreign travels had promoted, he had learnt from extensive acquaintance and comparison with strangers to respect other men's opinions and to set a proper estimate upon his own abilities; an advantage of no trivial importance in life, and not usually possessed by men of learning, who have been deprived of similar opportunities.

But that which is said more especially to have influenced the public opinion in his favour, was the affectionate and disinterested zeal, which, on all occasions, he manifested for the welfare of his patients; cheering their spirits with sprightly conversation; or soothing their apprehensions; and visiting, with indiscriminate attention, the palace of opulence and the hut of poverty. Those indeed who limit the qualifications of the physician to scientific knowledge, or

technical experience, entertain no very enlarged notions of his art, and have much yet to learn of the common nature of their species. Almost every man's experience must have taught him the influence of mind upon the strength and operations of the body; and he must have felt that almost as much relief is afforded by the affectionate humanity of the physician as by the application of his most potent medicines.

But notwithstanding this gentleness of manner, Dr. Rush was not the less distinguished for boldness and intrepidity of experiment. "His mildness to his patients," says one of his biographers, "was in no case extended to the diseases he had to combat. To these he was stern, inexorable, and deadly." But the example, in this instance, especially where the same learning and genius do not concur, ought to be cautiously recommended. In a science so precarious as that of medicine, health is perhaps less endangered by excessive caution than by headlong precipitation.

The prosperous course of Dr. Rush's practice was not interrupted by any memorable event, nor diversified by any adventure very worthy of relation, until the breaking out of the yellow fever in Philadelphia in 1793, which exhibits the most busy scene of his professional life, and one in which he acquired his most conspicuous reputation.

This disease had appeared in Philadelphia in 1762, and now returned after a lapse of thirty-one years, with unexampled malignity. War and famine have seldom presented a scene of more complicated horror. It commenced the first week in August and ended towards the close of October; during which time nearly the whole city was exhausted of its inhabitants. They had either fallen victims to the disease or had fled from their infectious dwellings; the rich, to the adjacent country, and a promiscuous multitude of the poor, to tents prepared for them in the vicinage of the city. The

number that died in this short period was about four thousand; and the condition of the diseased was often attended by circumstances of distress the most deplorable. Indeed, whatever has been ever recorded of human misery, or even what poetic fancy has ever imagined, appears to have been exhibited, on this occasion, in its most horrid reality.

The city itself presented every where the image of desolation. For nearly two months scarcely an individual was seen upon the streets, unless engaged in some melancholy office; seeking aid for the sick, or conducting the dead to their place of interment; and no other sound but that of the hearse or the vehicle of the physician, interrupted the frightful solitude. In a populous city, where men are accustomed to witness the bustle of multitudes and the activities of business, the absence of such objects necessarily fills the mind with the most painful or melancholy sensations.

The magnanimous conduct of Dr. Rush in this emergency, his devotion to his profession, and total disregard of personal safety, have entitled him to the unceasing gratitude and admiration of his countrymen. To use the words of the celebrated Zimmerman, "sa conduite a merité que non seulement la ville de Philadelphie, mais que l'humanité entière lui elève une statue."

During the fiercest rage of the disease, nearly all the physicians disappeared from the city; either having sought safety by flight into the country, or having perished in the indiscriminate mortality. At one time, when not less than six thousand persons were prostrate in the disease, three practitioners only remained to supply their necessities. The labours of Rush, in this emergency, were without remission, and he certainly accomplished difficulties, and sustained fatigues, to which the powers of life, under ordinary excitement, or with ordinary courage, had proved wholly inade-

quate. From the eighth to the fifteenth of September, he visited and prescribed for about one hundred and twenty patients per day. For several weeks his house, at all hours of the day and night, was filled, and sometimes surrounded, by multitudes imploring his assistance. To these he prescribed during the intervals of his visits, using the help of three of his pupils, who resided for this purpose in his family; employing them either in putting up medicine, in bleeding, or in visiting the sick. But although he devoted even the hurried periods of his meals to such offices, he was unable to supply the numerous applications that were made to him, and great numbers were obliged every day to retire, without the benefit of his advice or prescriptions; in which unhappy predicament he was obliged often to turn a deaf ear to the most pathetic entreaties, urged with all the zeal of friendship, of conjugal, filial, or parental affection; and even when riding through the streets, to drive with such speed as might secure him from interruption, or place him beyond the cries of his wretched petitioners. If, indeed, Dr. Rush had not been influenced at this season by motives more exalted than those that are mercenary, it would not be easy to say what sums he might not have amassed. Numerous were the instances in which profuse offers were made to him, and their acceptance almost implored, for his professional assistance. A wealthy citizen tendered him a deed for one of the best houses in Market street, if he would attend his son who was lying ill. A captain of a vessel once took from his pocket twenty pounds, offering them to him if he would pay his wife a single visit. A patient whom he had cured, directed, in his first feelings of gratitude, his desk to be opened, in which large sums were heaped, requesting that he would take a part, or, if he chose, the whole, as his compensation. These are but a few of many similar instances. It need scarcely be added, from

the well known character of Dr. Rush, that, in every such instance, when it was in his power to attend the patient, he would only receive his regular professional charge. The foregoing anecdotes are illustrative of the calamitous nature of the pestilence that was raging. A fuller account of it, as well as of his own personal history, is to be found in one of the volumes of his works, and its perusal will repay any reader, though not a physician. He will be then able to form some idea of the sufferings, anxiety and mental distress to which Dr. Rush was subjected during the prevalence of the disease.

By these unremitted labours for the relief of others, his own health was at one time overpowered, and his life for a while despaired of; he was, however, by the timely application of remedies, restored; and, with his usual assiduity, he returned to his practice. On this occasion he was urged by his friends to leave the city, and no longer place his safety in such imminent hazard. To their solicitations and urgent importunities, he replied, "that he would not abandon the post which Providence had assigned him; that he thought it his duty to sacrifice not only his pleasures and repose, but his life, should it be necessary, for the safety of his patients."

In their attempts to cure this disease, the physicians universally confessed the inefficacy of the usual remedies; and a great diversity of opinion soon arose concerning its nature and treatment. Dr. Rush first employed the gentle purges used in the yellow fever of 1762; for which he soon after substituted ipecacuanha, with bark and other tonics. He afterwards used blisters, or attempted to rouse the system by wrapping the body in blankets dipped in warm vinegar. He also endeavoured, by rubbing the right side with mercury, to excite the action of the vessels through the medium of the liver; all which remedies proved equally unserviceable. He

likewise consulted the practice of the West Indies, and following the best instructions he could receive, applied the cold bath; this, in some cases, gave relief, but the other remedies most approved in that country, he found hurtful, or wholly ineffectual.

For the course of treatment which he soon afterwards so successfully adopted, he is said to have been indebted to the following circumstance. In consulting the various writers upon the prevailing epidemic, he fell accidentally upon an old manuscript, relating to the yellow fever of 1747, in Virginia, written by a Dr. Mitchel, of that province, and presented to him by Dr. Franklin. It contained the following remarks: "An evacuation by purges is more necessary in this than in most other fevers, and an ill-timed scrupulousness about the weakness of the body, is of bad consequence in these urgent circumstances; I can affirm that I have given a purge in this case, when the pulse has been so low that it could hardly be felt, and the debility extreme, yet both the one and the other have been restored by it." Upon this single sentence Dr. Rush laid the foundations of his subsequent practice; for the history of which, we may refer to the excellent eulogium pronounced by his friend Dr. Ramsay, which contains a minute and authentic detail of it.

The methods he employed, though attended by the most manifest evidence of their utility, were much disapproved and questioned by many of his contemporaries. Besides prescribing larger doses than usual of calomel, he recommended and followed bleeding in a great variety of cases, in which this remedy, by other physicians, was not accredited; and although the quantity of blood taken was not without precedent, and was obviously required, from the excessively high inflammatory fever which attended the first attack of the disease, it exceeded, in various instances, the received

opinions relating to it, and thus encouraged prejudices against him, and gave easy circulation to the slanders of his enemies. Most of the physicians, and at length nearly the whole community, were enlisted in the quarrel. The public journals were converted into vehicles of abuse, and pamphlets were written against him, in a style remarkable for malice and scurrility. In these writings, he was even stigmatized as a murderer; and at one time was threatened with prosecution and expulsion from the city. Such a temporary sacrifice of reputation has been the lot of many eminent medical reformers: Dr. Rush himself remarks that Dr. Harvey lost all his business, after he published his account of the circulation of the blood, and Dr. Sydenham was thrown into the back-ground of his profession, after he introduced depleting medicines and cool air in the cure of inflammatory fevers. This ingratitude of the public to medical men is also feelingly noticed by him in one of his admirable introductory lectures, in reference to the circumstance of a motion at a public meeting in Philadelphia, in December 1793, to thank the physicians of the city for their services, in common with the board of health, during the fever of that year, not having been seconded, although their patients were chiefly poor people, and although eight out of thirty-five physicians who remained in the city, died, and of the survivors but three escaped the fever.

Thus Dr. Rush paid his contingent to the necessary contribution upon all human greatness. For such recompense he had employed his affectionate services upon his fellow citizens in their utmost distresses; sacrificed his repose, and hazarded his life, amidst dangers at which even the cheek of the warrior had blanched. The quarrels of physicians, more than of other men, are said to be fierce and implacable, and on this occasion the remark seems to have been sufficiently verified; at least we do not recollect any private dispute in

this city which has spread more extensively, or risen to so high a degree of rancour and animosity: there were some indeed who acted as principals in it, who had not even the excuse of professional jealousy to justify their termagant hostility, and whose motives we are at a loss to penetrate. To discover the impulse of malice in animal nature is, however, not always practicable. Good actions and good feelings are not usually without motive, but villanies are often practised from instinct. The whelp fawns upon the hand that feeds him, but the viper stings without provocation.

The enemies of Rush succeeded for some years in injuring his professional reputation, and in circumscribing his extensive practice. But it is the advantage of true merit to suffer but temporary obscuration. The traces of their enmity are now invisible, whilst the honour of his profession and glory of his country are associated with the name of Rush. The experience of the present day has sufficiently proved, that his deviation from established rules was not founded upon any levity of determination, or presumptuous confidence in his abilities; for even those who were loudest in their censure of his practice have, at last, united in the general strain of approbation.

As he was endowed with an inquisitive spirit, and as the fortunes of his life placed his various faculties in a state of almost continual exercise and improvement, we may suppose that nearly all the distempers which afflict humanity fell under his frequent care and attention; and that in all, he was qualified to extend the greatest efficacy of his art to palliate or relieve them. There are a few, however, noticed by his historians, for which he was more especially distinguished. His greatest reputation, they say, was acquired by the treatment of fevers and diseases of the lungs. The remedies which he has recommended in the latter are simple, and their

utility manifest. He is said to have performed himself many memorable cures, and to have been the author of various improvements.

As a teacher of medicine, Dr. Rush has acquired not less distinction than as a practitioner. The various duties that he fulfilled in this capacity excited his mind to research, while they diffused his name and principles extensively throughout the country. His private pupils were very numerous, from the commencement of his practice. In the nine last years they amounted to fifty. His pupils in class, during the first seasons of his public lectures, varied from sixteen to thirty. From 1789, they increased rapidly, and in 1812, amounted to four hundred and thirty. It is estimated that during his life, he had given instruction to more than two thousand pupils, who propagated his principles and practice of medicine throughout the whole of the United States, and in some instances to South America, the West Indies and Europe. His degrees of appointment, as appears from the journals of the university, were as follows:

In 1769, he was chosen professor of chemistry in the college of Philadelphia.

In 1789, he succeeded, in the same institution, to the chair of the theory and practice of medicine, vacated by the death of Dr. John Morgan.

In 1791, the college having been elevated to the university of Pennsylvania, he was elected, in this latter establishment, professor of the institutes of medicine and of clinical practice.

In 1796, he received the additional professorship, on the resignation of Dr. Kuhn, of the practice of physic, which he held with the two preceding appointments, though they required much laborious application, until the close of his life. Besides these various duties, he was for many years one of

the physicians of the Pennsylvania hospital, and contributed very essentially to the interest of that institution, by the various improvements which he suggested in the management of its economy.

The style and manner in which he conveyed his public lectures have been greatly admired; and those who have had the best opportunities to judge, do not hesitate to rank him as one of the most popular lecturers of his age. "His traits of physiognomy," says a writer who witnessed the latter years of his life, and his general demeanor, "inspire the greatest deference and respect: and time which has bared his brow and silvered his remaining locks, has not yet quenched the fire of his imagination. His eye sparkles with the scintillations of genius, and his voice varies to all the notes of the human passions, from the most resolute sternness to the mildest expressions of benignity and friendship. The stories and anecdotes which long experience and a retentive memory have furnished him, and with which he often illustrates his medical doctrines, he relates with inimitable felicity; and the whole of his audience, though many of them from dissipated habits or deficient education are little sensible to either moral or intellectual beauty, listen to him with the greatest curiosity and attention."

This talent of eloquence, in the profession of Dr. Rush, is not usually rated according to its importance; because men seldom reflect justly upon the influence of example over the sentiments and dispositions of our nature. Genius as well as stupidity is contagious; and the business of teaching others is therefore seldom safely consigned to persons of rude exterior, hesitating speech, or deficient taste and imagination. The province of a teacher is not only to enlighten the reason of his pupil, but to render him emulous of learning, of honourable sentiments, and of the address and polite manners

of a gentleman. The spirit of enterprise which has distinguished the science of medicine since the death of Rush, in this country, is certainly in a great measure to be ascribed to the potent charms of his eloquence. His example and his lectures stirred up a spirit of emulation amongst his pupils which has raised many of them to the highest honours of their profession, and has reflected a lustre upon the medical character of our country.

To his fame as a practitioner and teacher of medicine, Dr. Rush has added the no less glorious distinction of a good writer. His printed works are comprised in seven volumes, and, with the exception of one containing miscellaneous essays on philosophy, morals, and literature, are wholly employed upon subjects of medicine. Upon these volumes we do not feel our competence to speculate: they are said, by those who are conversant in the kind of learning of which they treat, to be of incalculable value for general information, and especially for the particular knowledge which they convey of our climate and its peculiar diseases, which is not to be found in books imported from foreign countries. His style of writing is always attractive, and bears every where the impression of his genius. "It is a matter of wonder," says Dr. Ramsay, "how a physician who had so many patients to attend, a professor who had so many pupils to instruct, could find leisure to write so much, and at the same time so well." As a writer his biographers mention this peculiarity, that in composing he never sought retirement or silence, but wrote, on the contrary, with greater spirit amidst the company of his friends, and clamorous merriment of his children.

In the volume of miscellaneous writings, to which we have alluded, there are several essays of much interest, on religion, politics, and education. There are some also of which the doctrine may appear not altogether unexceptionable. That

in which he labours to prove the inutility of the dead languages as a branch of liberal education, has been often controverted. His opinions upon this subject are not new, but are presented in a very ingenious and persuasive manner, and have done much to depreciate classical learning in America; they flatter our interests, and soothe our indolence, and will therefore be listened to with prone and easy condescension; but our example in the career of letters has yet furnished no practical illustration of their propriety.

The arguments which he has founded on individual nations, if closely examined, will furnish no conclusive evidence in favour of his doctrine. If he has the Greeks on his side, he has the Romans against him. The latter people, who were perhaps not inferior to the former in any department of letters, considered the study of Greek, in their system of polite education, as indispensable, and their most eminent authors were distinguished for an accurate knowledge of that language. Its study is recommended also by Cicero, Horace, Pliny, and Quintilian, as the very best kind of discipline for early youth; and the reasons which were sound with regard to them, are much more so in their application to the moderns; our languages bearing towards theirs a much greater analogy. But this study, says Dr. Rush, draws us from the contemplation of nature, and makes us heedless imitators. Those students who confine themselves to their own language are not the less prone on that account to a servile imitation. Demosthenes is said to have transcribed Thucydides eight times, and to have committed the greater part of that author to memory; thinking that he could not better study nature than by imitating those who had best described her appearances and operations. Virgil, not less than Homer, has received the admiration of the world; and, to use the expression of an eminent critic, if formed by Homer, is the very best of his

works. The Greek, it may be observed also, consisted of various dialects, which were almost distinct languages, and these, which were contained in a few scanty volumes, were studied with a rigid discipline and attention, which are not expected amidst the multitude of our modern productions.

The arguments of Dr. Rush, drawn from the effect of the classics upon individuals, are either in their favour, or resolve themselves into nothing. Studies of no kind will confer intellect or wisdom upon fools. But a small portion of mankind are fitted for the occupation of letters. The greater mass are designed for more humble, though perhaps not less useful, pursuits, and to teach them Greek or Latin would indeed be a misapplication of their faculties. Queen Elizabeth was instructed in the dead languages with special care, to which was also joined a familiar acquaintance with all those of modern Europe; yet we cannot perceive that this occasioned with her any deficiency in the science of government, or "in the knowledge of men and things." In her successor, we have an example not only of the inutility of Latin and Greek, but of every other species of instruction, when employed upon feeble or incompetent faculties.

Dr. Rush's opinion that the study of words retards our proficiency in the knowledge of things, corresponds not well with his usual discernment in tracing our mental operations. It is at variance with the best authorities, and seems to have been formed without due consideration of the subject.

His opinion that the learning and genius of the ancients may be transmitted to us by translation, is by no means indisputable. In reply we may only ask, what would be the fate of Shakspeare, or of Milton, or even of Addison, if consigned to a German or French translation? Even the beauties of Spenser or Montaigne are not to be recovered by any modern phraseology from the obsolete language in which they were composed.

The cultivation of Greek and Latin is further stated by Dr. Rush to be an impediment to the perfection of our mother tongue. "It is to the neglect of them," he observes, "that the late improvements in our language may be reasonably ascribed." It is, however, undeniable that those who have most improved our language were pre-eminent for their knowledge of Latin and Greek. In the acquisition of these latter languages, from the peculiar nature of their construction, the student is obliged to proceed by a continual process of reasoning, to examine each sentence with critical accuracy, and to consider words in all their various relations; which, added to the knowledge he acquires of etymology in his native language, must be considered as no inconsiderable advantage. In our own tongue, which is learned by rote, no such application is common or necessary. Foreign language affords also a means of comparison, and the Latin, by its inverted construction, is best suited to such a purpose. It is difficulty which sharpens the skill, and comparison that imparts to the mind taste and discrimination; and in what regards the highest excellence of language, dignity of thought, or elegance of composition, it is generally acknowledged, that the best models of imitation are found amongst the writings of antiquity: living languages are also exposed to caprice and inconstancy; these are no longer subject to variation; nothing is rendered vulgar by common use, and nothing mean or obsolete by time. In the actual condition of the world, we are not only to consider what kind of learning may best improve the human faculties, but also what is sanctioned by the reigning habits and exigencies of society. The Latin and Greek have now become, by allusions and quotations, so incorporated with modern literature, as to render a knowledge of them, independent of other considerations, a matter of indispensable necessity. Those who are ignorant of the imitations or clas-

sical allusions found in modern languages, will understand but very imperfectly some of their most exquisite beauties.

The same remarks may be extended to the study of the ancient mythology, upon which Dr. Rush has likewise animadverted with great vehemence. This system of religion, though the offspring of ignorance, has been rendered, by the embellishments of genius, and by custom, an inseparable part of polite education. The licentious tales interwoven with it, might indeed, in a state of negative innocence, prove dangerous to morals, but in the actual condition of society, an exclusive knowledge of good has been rendered scarcely desirable, or at least altogether impracticable. In a literary point of view, there are few scholars who would wish these specious follies banished from the region of letters. To philosophers they have furnished materials of speculation, and to poets and orators, some of the most pleasing allusions, and splendid images, of their writings.

Those who labour to decry classical education never fail to lament, in pathetic strains, the vexations it imposes upon youth, and to rail at school-masters. Such writers, if their pity be sincere, may indeed be praised for their humanity, but are certainly not to be commended for their knowledge of human nature. Their reasonings can have no other effect than to render us dissatisfied with labour, which is both essential to our happiness, and necessary to all human excellence.

We have been particular in noticing this part of Dr. Rush's writings, from a knowledge of the evil it has produced upon our system of public instruction. In the state of which he was a native, education holds a course extremely devious and irregular, and to his authority we may justly ascribe, in a great measure, its degenerate establishments. It is yet usual to cite his name in relation to this subject, as a decisive ar-

gument, and many persons, under the influence of his opinions, are daily led into professional pursuits without adequate preparations; or at least without any of those studious habits which are required to fit men for the serious and useful business of life.

Men of ardent imaginations are, not unfrequently led from the ambition of appearing in opposition to the received opinions of mankind or a love of paradox, into reasonings wholly different from their serious and deliberate sentiments. Dr. Rush took care that his own sons should receive a classical education, and their example has happily furnished no corroboration of his precepts or arguments. It may be added too, that he had himself paid great attention to his classical studies in early life, and few persons had a higher relish of their beauties. His conversation was often decorated by apposite quotations from them, especially the Latin poets. From Tacitus, also, he delighted to quote, and always in the original. Let not, therefore, those who would cite his theory on this point—a theory which we candidly think erroneous—forget to cite also his own example. He acquired languages with facility: besides, being familiar with the French, he was able to read both Italian and Spanish.

In all matters of education he appears to have entertained too great a partiality for compendious systems. Men who are in the possession of knowledge almost always form an erroneous estimate of the application necessary in its acquisition. From his eagerness to simplify the science of medicine, he declares that three years are sufficient to reach those acquirements upon which he himself employed nine years of unremitting and laborious study. A profession involving so many important considerations, and connected with so many auxiliary branches of science, ought not to be attempted with superficial accomplishments. Much less evil at least is to be

apprehended from the excess of a contrary doctrine; especially in this new country, where experience has not yet taught us the fallacy of mountebank pretensions, and where men of noted ignorance or disordered intellects are often in higher repute than philosophers, and are supposed not less fitted to counteract the diseases and scrutinize the subtile operations of the human body.

The political character Dr. Rush, which we are now to consider, was, in the estimation of his contemporaries, highly respectable. He was united in sentiments and affections with nearly all the distinguished patriots of the revolution. He mixed in the most important councils of the nation, and his talents as a writer were also faithfully employed in the acquisition of our liberty. He not only wrote himself, but inspired other men of talents, who enjoyed more leisure than himself, with the same spirit. He was amongst the first acquaintances of Thomas Paine in the United States; he instigated, planned, and assisted the first compositions of that well known writer, which contributed so powerfully to rouse the opposition to England, and to support the spirit of the nation in times of great despondency and misfortune. In conjunction with John Adams, he persuaded Paine to undertake to write in defence of the American cause, and suggested the title which his first paper bore, viz. Common Sense. He was chosen in July, 1776, a representative to the general congress, and subscribed his name to the Declaration of Independence, which had been ratified some time previous to his appointment. Independence was the favourite theme upon which, during the whole war, he dedicated all his faculties, and from the extent of his influence, we cannot estimate at a low rate his instrumentality in the accomplishment of that glorious and splendid enterprise.

In 1777, he was appointed, for the middle department, physician general of the military hospitals, and in 1787, a member of the convention of Pennsylvania for the adoption of the federal constitution, a measure which he warmly advocated, as the only means to cement the union, to give stability and energy to the government, and to secure respectability abroad, and prosperity at home. With the view of aiding this most important cause, his labours were incessant. Besides making the merits of the proposed constitution the subject of his daily eulogium in all companies, he employed many hours during the nights of every week, after the labours of his professional duty were over, in answering the objections which were made to it, in the newspapers, and in pointing out the benefits which would ensue to the United States from its adoption. In a letter to a friend, in a distant state, dated October 1, 1787, he says, "The new federal government will be adopted by our state. It is a masterpiece of human wisdom, and happily accommodated to the present state of society in America. I now look forward to a golden age. The new constitution realises every hope of the patriot, and rewards every toil of the hero. My fellow citizens insist upon putting me into our state convention, which will meet on the last Tuesday of next month. Will my mind bear such numerous, complicated, and opposite studies and occupations? I love my country ardently, and have not been idle in promoting her interests during the session of the convention. Every thing published in all our papers, except by "the Foreign Spectator," during the whole summer, was the effusion of my federal principles. Since the convention has risen, I have been followed by many writers, who have great merit. I enclose you some of my paragraphs, from Hall and Seller's paper, to be republished in your state."

To the government of his own state he was not less atten-

tive. He had always been opposed to the constitution formed in the year 1776, on the principle of a single legislative body; and had written much against it, and in favour of a new one. After the convention which formed the federal constitution had adjourned, and published their plan, he again exerted himself on the subject, and had frequent meetings at his house with members of the legislature, to fix the outlines of a new form of state government. Of this caucus Mr. Clymer and Mr. Wynkoop, of Bucks county, were members.

Although politics, after the revolution, were but a secondary object in the scheme of his life, he found himself deeply absorbed in the altercation which immediately succeeded it, and exerted himself with a rational vehemence for the interests of whatever party he thought it his duty to espouse. These events are, however, attended by no memorable consequence connected with his name, and may be dismissed without particular attention.

He lived long enough to be cured of many visions of greatness and felicity, which he had built up for his country upon the base of her republican institutions, and to learn that mankind are not susceptible of all that degree of wisdom, which he and many others of his countrymen, in the ardour of patriotic feeling, had been led to anticipate. In a letter to Dr. Ramsay in 1798, he says, "I believe all power, whether hereditary or elective, will always fail of producing order and happiness in the hands of man. He alone who created and redeemed man is qualified to govern him."

After the establishment of the federal government, he withdrew himself altogether from public life, and devoted the residue of his time to his social duties and the exercise of his profession. The only office he accepted, as a reward for his many services, and which he held for fourteen years, was that of treasurer of the United States mint; a charge which

added something to his revenues, without interfering in any way with his professional occupations.

As a private citizen, he encouraged many useful institutions, and held many places of honour and confidence. He was president of the society for the abolition of slavery, a feature in our institutions which he had regretted deeply from his earliest years, and to which he remained inflexibly opposed, until the day of his death; he had indeed published an essay relative to it, in a volume as early as 1774. He was president for some time of the Philadelphia Medical Society; he was also vice president and one of the founders of the Philadelphia Bible Society, the constitution of which he draughted; he was one of the vice presidents of the American Philosophical Society, and was a member of many other literary institutions both in this country and Europe.

He took a warm interest in the establishment of the Philadelphia Dispensary, in 1786, and served for many years as one of the physicians of that institution, the good example of which was speedily imitated in Boston, New York, Baltimore, Charleston, and other cities. He was a principal agent in founding Dickenson college at Carlisle, and was chiefly instrumental in bringing from Scotland Dr. Nesbit, who for several years presided over that institution. In order to give a general diffusion of knowledge throughout the country, he advocated also the establishment of free schools. On this subject he wrote several very sensible and eloquent essays, pointing out, at the same time, the objects which ought to enter into a system of general instruction adapted to the situation of our country, and our republican government. He felt a very deep concern in the diminution of capital punishments, and as early as the year 1774, had called the attention of the public to the subject, by an article in the Pennsylvania Packet. Being an active member of a

society held at the house of Dr. Franklin, for "promoting political inquiries," he there read a dissertation in March 1787, on the same subject, entitled "an Inquiry into the Effects of public Punishments upon Criminals and upon Society," and followed it up afterwards by an excellent essay on the consistency of capital punishments, with reason and revelation. In the year 1794, the legislature of Pennsylvania abolished death as a punishment for all crimes, except that of murder in the first degree. Believing that all human happiness, and especially when allied with republican institutions, was inseparably connected with virtue, he employed his pen and eloquence in preserving the integrity of the public morals. This object he strove to promote in all his addresses to his pupils, and in all his writings, especially those he published on the subject of public instruction.

His inquiry into the effects of ardent spirits upon the body and mind, is written with great fervency and exuberance of genius, and is supposed to have contributed not a little to diminish the vice of drunkenness, one which, by ruining health, poisons existence, and which has sometimes brought the most hopeful virtues and noblest faculties to ridicule and dishonour. His essay on this subject he published, that it might be universally read, in the form of a pamphlet, and distributed it gratuitously amongst the people, through the medium of the clergy and religious assemblies. Except Dr. Franklin's "Way to Wealth," probably no small publication ever had a more extensive circulation, or did more good. He also wrote at the same time against tobacco, and has exhibited a frightful catalogue of the evils arising from the intemperate use of that stimulus. His essay "on the Influence of physical Causes on the moral Faculty," has been universally admired as one of the most profound productions of modern times. He afterwards made the "influence of physical causes in promoting

an increase of the strength and activity of the intellectual faculties of man," the subject of an introductory lecture to his medical course in the year 1799.

The last work of Dr. Rush was "Medical Inquiries, and Observations upon the Diseases of the Mind," which he published the year before his death. He often said, that he bestowed more labour on this work, than on any he had ever composed. He has embodied in it the result of all his observations and reflexions on the constitution and diseases of the mental faculties, made during a long course of practice, particularly in the Pennsylvania Hospital; and of his study of various authors who had treated on that interesting subject. It has been pronounced by very respectable authority, "at once a metaphysical treatise on human understanding; a physiological theory of organic and thinking life; a code of pure morals and religion; a book of the best maxims to promote wisdom and happiness; in fine, a collection of classical, polite, poetical, and sound literature."

In all the periods of life, he was remarkable for his attention to religious duties, and his reverence for the holy scriptures. He urges, in all his writings, the excellency of the christian faith, and its happy influence upon the social habits of the country. To his students he especially recommends it as one of the concomitant excellencies and subsidiary accomplishments of the profession. He omitted no possible occasion of attending church himself, and considered the observance of the sabbath, even as a civil institution, a most rational policy. On the sabbath, he observes, not only refection is given to those who are wasted by fatigues, but the idle are diverted from unprofitable or vicious amusements; they not only acquire pious sentiments, but contract those amiable and decorous habits, which dignify and adorn private society. When men of conspicuous reputation neglected the ordinances

of the sabbath, he considered them very justly as mischievous to the community; for men who impair the honest and decent manners of a state, are not less criminal than they who trample upon its laws and institutions.

He received during his life, besides the general esteem of his countrymen, several peculiar marks of public favour. In the year 1793. the Board of Health of Philadelphia presented him with a large piece of plate, with an appropriate inscription for his gratuitous service to the poor, during the epidemic fever of that year. In the year 1805, he received from the king of Prussia, a coronation medal, for his replies to queries on the yellow fever. In 1807, the queen of Etruria also presented him with a gold medal, for a paper on the same subject written at her request; and in 1811, he received a diamond ring from the emperor of Russia, in testimony of the respect in which that potentate held his medical character.

The useful life of Dr. Rush, whilst yet capable of much good to mankind, was terminated on the nineteenth of April, 1813, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. He had yet experienced no diminution of mental faculties, and but few physical infirmities. He died of an epidemic, which prevailed at that time in Philadelphia, termed typhus or spotted fever, after a few days sickness. The spontaneous homage of the people on this occasion, affords a decisive and honourable testimony of his eminent merits. His dwelling, during the last days of his illness, was beset by crowds of citizens, and the prayers of thousands, who had experienced his benevolence, or owed their lives to his skill, were offered to heaven for his recovery. The annunciation of his death threw a general gloom upon the community, and was accompanied with marks of profound grief and affection for his memory. The loss of no individual of this country, excepting that of

Washington or of Franklin, was lamented with more universal and pathetic demonstrations of sorrow.

In exterior, Dr. Rush was favoured by nature with many advantages. He was above the middle size, of a slender but well proportioned figure, and his general deportment commanded respect and deference. Those who knew him well, and have described him with minute accuracy, tell us that the diameter of his head from back to front was uncommonly large, that he had a prominent forehead, aquiline nose, highly animated blue eyes, with a chin and mouth expressive and comely; his look was fixed, his aspect thoughtful, and the general traits of his physiognomy bespoke strength and activity of intellect.

Throughout life he was distinguished by the affability and polite manners of a gentleman: and for his excellence in such accomplishments his friends have bestowed upon him no ordinary praises. To please in order to instruct was his favourite maxim, and even in old age he retained all the gayety and attic spirit of conversation, which eminently distinguished his early years.

As a scholar, he was well versed in ancient and modern learning, and was fond of poetry and eloquence, with which he relieved the severity of his professional studies, and furnished fluency and ornament to his style of conversation and writing. For his reputation, both literary and professional, he was little indebted to any adventitious benefits of fortune. He was endowed with good faculties, a penetrating mind, a ready apprehension, exuberant imagination, and extraordinary memory, and these qualities he improved by a long course of unwearied study and observation.

As a physician he has left upon the age in which he lived, the impress of his character and genius. In the minds of his own countrymen he holds an undisputed pre-eminence, and

amongst foreign nations his fame is universally acknowledged. One trait of his character should not be forgotten; he was eminently charitable to the poor, both in direct donations and in giving them his professional services gratuitously. There were also two classes of persons whom he made it a point never to charge, unless they were in easy circumstances—clergymen and officers of the revolutionary army. It may serve as a useful example, especially to the young, to know, that, although he was uniformly charitable, and towards his patients ever forbearing in his charges, where their circumstances made it necessary, yet such was his success in life, the result of his great industry and high character, that besides bringing up a large family in abundance, and living with liberal hospitality, he left behind him property of value to his family, accumulated solely by his professional earnings, never having embarked in any pecuniary speculations. With him money became the effect, though it never seemed to have been the motive of his exertions. It may indeed be doubted whether any medical man ever rendered more gratuitous services. He constantly enjoined an attention to the sufferings of the indigent upon his private pupils, and to his public class; quoting the remarks of Dr. Boerhaave that "he esteemed the poor his best patients, for God was their paymaster." Payment for medical services was the last object of consideration with him; when called to assist a person on his death-bed, one of the injunctions to his son, was "to be kind to the poor;" and on the day of his funeral, the streets were lined with thousands, who shed tears of heart-felt sorrow for the loss of their kind and humane benefactor.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, a native of Boston, was born on the seventeenth of January, 1706. The paternal branch of his ancestors inhabited the county of Northampton in England. They were proprietors of a small freehold estate near the village of Eaton, where, according to the traditions of that place, the family had been established for more than three centuries. They pursued generally some trade, and were very honourably distinguished in their neighbourhood, for industry, honesty, and mechanical ingenuity. His father, who was of the persuasion of the Puritans, emigrated in 1682 to the colony of Massachusetts, the common refuge of those of his sect, who fled from the persecutions of their native country; but unaccustomed to agriculture or commerce, the usual occupations of the colonists, he had recourse for a livelihood to the business of chandler and soap-boiler, which, during the remainder of his life, he pursued with little success, and lived in an innocent and unambitious poverty. Of his mother, whom he mentions with affection, he has left no very important intelligence: her name was Folger; she was a native of Boston, and was descended from one of the principal settlers of New England.

From the facility he discovered in learning the rudiments of his native language, his parents believed him endowed

with more than ordinary genius, and resolved to raise him to the profession of a clergyman. He was, therefore, placed in a grammar school to receive the requisite instructions. He engaged himself with so much ardour in this pious enterprise, and pursued his studies with so much diligence, that before he had reached the eighth year of his age, he had attained a great reputation, in his class, for industry and capacity.

But these academical honours, and hopes of ecclesiastical distinction, were of short duration; for towards the end of the first year his parents discovered that the expense of collegiate instruction would far exceed their slender revenues, and he was transferred to a school where, at a charge more moderate, he might acquire the common principles of an English education. From the latter situation, at the expiration of twelve months, he was taken home to prosecute the business of his father.

He was now employed, during two years, in tending the shop, cutting wicks for candles, filling moulds, and running errands; nor was this period of his life, according to his own estimation, wholly unprofitable. By the rigid discipline of economy and industry, and by the privations and disappointments to which he was subject from his indigent condition, he learnt to accommodate his mind to the vicissitudes of fortune; he acquired, also, what he justly valued as no trivial benefit throughout life, an indifference for the quality of his nourishment, with the power of regulating its quantity, as well as that of sleep, by the necessities of nature. By these early habits of temperance, he likewise seasoned the native vigour of his constitution, which enabled him even to an extreme old age to preserve the vivacity of his health and spirits.

Nor was the generosity of his nature concealed amidst the drudgery of this servile employment. In the various enterprises of spirit and resolution in which he engaged the companions of his recreations, he displayed a manifest superiority both of ingenuity and bodily accomplishments, and soon procured amongst them a reputation for capacity and courage. But that which exhibits more conspicuously the dignity of his ambition, was the noble ardour which he discovered for the acquisition of knowledge. All the books placed within his grasp, which in a new colony were of difficult access, he devoured with insatiate rapture: travels, voyages, historical compilations; even the odd volumes, which accident offered him, he read with frequent repetition; nor did the folios of controversial divinity, which the bigotry of his father had preserved, though unintelligible to his unripened understanding, escape his undistinguishing voracity.

In this indiscriminate reading he discovered, however, a few works, which he perused with a favourite attention, and which, he imagines, had no inconsiderable influence upon the habits and dispositions of his life. Those he has mentioned, are an "Essay upon Projects," by Defoe; an "Essay on doing Good," by Mather; and the "Lives of Plutarch." For the latter of these in particular he entertained the highest admiration: and the frequent perusal of this polite and elegant author, presented to his view so opportunely, at an age when the impressions are yet lively and permanent, had, no doubt, in a mind so formed for moral reflection and virtuous excitement, a very salutary tendency; and we may reasonably ascribe to this partiality many of the eminent virtues which distinguished his character; especially those high sentiments of honour, and undaunted love of liberty, which an acquaintance with the writers of antiquity seldom fails to produce in generous dispositions.

But these studies were not of a nature to reconcile him to the humility of his condition, for which his original education had already inspired him with no very favourable sentiments. The father also, entertaining a high sense of literary merit, by applauding the industry and exciting the emulation of his son, had contributed not a little to animate his ambition. He became, therefore, every day, more and more querulous and discontented; and his aversions being confirmed by the increase of his age and intelligence, he resolved, at length, to disenthral himself from the fetters of so rude and inglorious an occupation.

Having passed, in his recreations, much time on the water, he had acquired great dexterity in swimming and in the management of boats; and prompted, it is said, by this kind of amusement, he conceived at first an ardent inclination for a seafaring life. This scheme he was, however, upon application, though urged with frequent importunities, obliged to relinquish, as his father, who had already lost a son upon the sea, violently opposed it. But to console him for the prohibition, he was permitted to make choice of some business more congenial, than that now allotted him, to his genius and inclinations.

For this purpose he was conducted through the town of Boston, by his father, to inspect the various trades; and after much search and deliberation, he commenced the business of a *cutler*. At this he remained the stipulated time of probation, but the sum required as the fee of apprenticeship being thought exorbitant, he was constrained to abandon it; and no other occasion intervening, of placing him advantageously, he was finally bound to his own brother, as the printer of a newspaper. To this business he entertained no particular dislike; but to the obligation of an indenture, which appears to have been exacted by the father's advice,

to restrain his roving inclinations, he submitted with a very unwilling acquiescence. The choice was, however, fortunate, and proved, in the issue, extremely beneficial in promoting his interest and reputation.

Having now entered upon a more respectable employment, or one more suited to his natural inclinations, he pursued it with the most laborious industry; and soon reached, in the art of printing, an ingenuity, not usually at that time attained in America. The ordinary intervals of labour, and days of recreation, he employed, not after the example of most of his age, in idleness or dissipation, but in the increase of his mechanical knowledge and mental accomplishments. Even the devotions of the Sabbath, notwithstanding the pious vigilance of his parents, were frequently neglected; his meals postponed, and sometimes forgotten; and very often whole nights consumed in the pursuit of some favourite study.

He read, about this time, a work in recommendation of vegetable diet, and resolved to abstain altogether from the use of meat; a practice which he observed, for several years, with various advantages; for besides promoting his health and clearness of understanding, as he remarks, it enabled him, of the sum usually expended in his boarding, to reserve about one third for the purchase of books; and finally, by the unceremonious simplicity of his repasts, which consisted but of a few biscuits, and a glass of water, with the occasional addition of some raisins, he made no inconsiderable acquisition of time, for the perusal of the books which his meritorious economy had procured him.

Amongst the authors, which accident opportunely offered to his notice, was an odd volume of the Spectator. The charms of this writer took possession of his affections, for some time to the exclusion of every other study. He attempted

to imitate his style; and the series of compositions, of which he has given an account in his Memoirs, that he used for this imitation, is entitled to no ordinary praise; for under the most judicious superintendence, few indeed have employed a process more rational, or one which has been approved by a more ample and evident success: and that he had the skill, at an age, when others are scarcely acquainted with the lowest elements of literature, to estimate such writers as Addison, affords no doubtful proof of his excellent taste and judgment, and of the elevated sentiments he had received from nature.

Having "failed altogether in Arithmetic, whilst at school," and now ashamed of his deficiency in a science so necessary and so universal, he procured a book, and by his unaided exertions soon attained a sufficient knowledge of it; adding, at the same time, some acquaintance with English grammar, geometry, and navigation. He studied, likewise, Locke on the Understanding, the Logic of the Port Royal, and the Memorabilia of Xenophon. From the perusal of the latter author, he contracted a fondness for the character of Socrates; and his manner of reasoning and moralizing he afterwards followed with extreme predilection: nor since the age of the Athenian philosopher, has there existed, perhaps, in the knowledge of mankind, an individual so fitted, by a conformity of sentiments and intellects, for this laudable and splendid imitation.

To the reading of Xenophon he ascribes the correction of many evil habits and propensities. He was addicted to sophistical argument, disputation and contradiction: indulging, according to his own acknowledgment, in a disposition to raillery, often without prudence or generosity; and in his early youth, yet ignorant of the laws of propriety, unconscious of the impotence of human reason, was presumptuous

and pertinacious in his opinions. It is to the contrary practice, which he assumed, after the precepts and example of Socrates, of urging his sentiments with moderation, and of enlisting, by his own modesty, the vanity of other men in his favour, that he ascribes the powerful influence he always maintained in the community, and the success of the numerous enterprises in which he engaged for the honour and ornament of his country.

It was during his apprenticeship that he attempted his first literary compositions; of which we may give some account. Of his intellectual progress the details cannot be unwelcome, and are perhaps not less fertile of instruction than the more turbulent incidents of his political life.

Though born with a genius more favourable to science than to polite letters, he was first ambitious of the reputation of a poet, and having produced many verses in secret, he at length exhibited a specimen of his performance, with much diffidence and hesitation, to his friends with great approbation; and encouraged by this first success he published soon after, in a more laborious composition, two ballads, which on account of some occasional interest of the subject, were likewise applauded, and read through the town of Boston with avidity; but his father, who appears to have possessed no contemptible judgment in these matters, seeing that the progress of his son's more useful occupations might be retarded, or his genius perverted by this inclination for rhyming, by criticising ironically his verses, and reminding him of the proverbial beggary of poets, discouraged him from this species of composition. He persuaded him, however, as a means of procuring fortune and reputation, to endeavour to attain excellence in prose, and to this object the young Franklin now directed his ambition.

The newspaper conducted by his brother, being the only vehicle of the kind in New England, and the second which had been established in America, engrossed, with much interest, the attention of the public. The most accomplished scholars of the town contributed to its importance by their communications; and many critics, assembling daily at the printing-office, discussed the merits of the original productions which appeared in it. Franklin, who had already caught the rage of publication, being impatient to discover the public opinion of his abilities, disguised ingeniously his handwriting, and sent anonymously a paper, which he had composed with great care, to the inspection of these critics; and having set up the type himself, awaited, with timorous anxiety, the decision of its merits. On the next day, his composition being produced, was read, commented, and applauded; and he enjoyed the "exquisite pleasure," as he terms it, of listening to his own praises; which were bestowed at least without flattery, and though fraught, perhaps, with no extraordinary taste or intelligence, contributed to encourage his youthful hopes, and animate his future exertions.

He continued his clandestine correspondence in a succession of pieces, which met a still more favourable reception, and amongst the readers of the journal excited a lively desire of discovering the author. Nor did the vanity of Franklin long suffer them to labour under the burthen of curiosity.

But this literary success was soon followed by consequences which marred his agreeable prospects, and changed in some degree the destinies of his life. His writings in the newspaper soon procured him the notice of the most distinguished persons of the town, who regarded him as a youth of uncommon abilities. He began, therefore, we may reasona-

bly imagine, to entertain sentiments above the common drudgery of his business, and perhaps obeyed his brother with a less willing submission. The brother, on the other hand, who was not remarkable for any superiority of intellect, or generosity of mind, observed this growing credit of his apprentice with jealousy; and considering his praises as a tacit reproach of his own inferiority, was much more inclined to depreciate than magnify his merit. From these principles of discord many quarrels and contentions arose between them, which were heightened gradually by petty provocations to a degree of inextinguishable rancour, and though sometimes composed by the father, to whose arbitration they mutually appealed, burst out again with increased animosity, till at length the brother, under sanction of his age and privilege of master, resorted to blows in support of his authority.

This brother, on account of some libellous publication inserted in his paper, of which the author's name was refused, was about this time imprisoned, and restricted by an award of the court from any further exercise of his editorial functions. To evade the latter part of the sentence the young Franklin, by a fictitious agreement, became nominal proprietor and editor; and in this capacity, during the incarceration of his brother, defended him with great spirit and generosity, publishing several strictures, remarkable for wit and satire, against the members of the government. For this gratuitous defence, however, in which he had incurred the displeasure of the administration, the brother appears to have entertained no very profound gratitude, for after his enlargement he not only retained his ill-natured passions, but renewed his system of flagellation with increased severity.

This usage Franklin continued to bear, for some time, with silent indignation; but perceiving no reasonable termination of it, resolved, by the only expedient which remained for the purpose, to assert his independence ;—to escape from the reach of injuries which his situation did not permit him to resent.

On intimation of this design, his brother's influence and malignity precluded, in his native place, all hopes of employment; and it became necessary that he should seek elsewhere the means of subsistence. He had, besides, in the levity of youthful conversation, excited amongst the pious inhabitants of Boston, some apprehensions concerning the purity of his religious principles; and his politics likewise had brought him into disreputation with several of the distinguished members of government; and having, in this emergency, found a vessel in the harbour, bound to New York, he engaged a passage and embarked abruptly for that city.

This evasion and breach of obligation, although his indenture had been previously cancelled for the benefit of his brother, Franklin has comprehended, with more generosity than justice, amongst the errors of his life. Corporal punishment, if at all justifiable, belongs only to parental tenderness to inflict, and the unnatural delegation of such authority tends, perhaps more than any single cause, to degrade human nature, and to propagate slavery amongst mankind. Obedience to a beneficent government is, amongst individuals and nations, without doubt an honourable injunction; and also to rebel against tyranny, is, especially in America, not thought inglorious. Happy! if in humble life, under the rigours of poverty and persecutions of misfortune, all men should retain, like Franklin, the sentiment of their dignity, and the remembrance that there are natural rights paramount to civil or political obligations.

To the severe and arbitrary spirit of this brother, he ascribes, however, the first impressions of that hatred of tyranny, which influenced all the actions and opinions of his future life. The application of the lash, in admitting this consequence, is indeed less a cause of regret, than resistance to it is a just subject of commendation.

After a prosperous voyage of a few days, he landed at New York, where having endeavoured, for some time in vain, to procure occupation, he proceeded onwards with a faint hope of better fortune, to Philadelphia. After much intermediate fatigue from travelling on foot, or the rowing of a boat; and having, more than once, had occasion to repent of his fugitive expedition, he arrived in that city. He now perceived himself, at the age of seventeen years, thrown upon the mercy of the world; at the distance of four hundred miles from his native home, without a friend or counsellor; with scarce a hope of employment; and of the slender provision of money which he had carried with him, but a single dollar remaining in his pocket.

His appearance at Philadelphia, on this occasion, if we compare it with many succeeding incidents of his life, was not a little romantic. He is represented as making his entrance into Market street with a roll of bread under each arm; with his pockets enormously distended by shirts and stockings, which he had crammed into them on leaving the boat, and thus accoutred, walking, in the solemnity of a Sunday morning, through the principal streets of the city. An appearance so singular drew upon him, even in those days of rustic simplicity, the observation of the inhabitants; among others, of his future wife, in whose eyes he made, it seems, "a very awkward and ridiculous figure." Having eat a portion of his bread and bestowed the remainder on a fellow passenger, he sought a draught of water from the Delaware;

and being afterwards borne, by the passing crowd, to a meeting of Quakers, sat down amongst them and slept until the end of the service, when he was admonished by one of the congregation to retire.

But two printing houses were, at that time, established in Philadelphia, in one of which he happily obtained employment as compositor; and instigated by the necessities of his condition, by the ardour which enterprising youth feels in the first enjoyment of liberty, and sensible that he had now to commence life with no other pretensions than such as he derived from personal merit, he exerted in his business the most studious and indefatigable industry. In his private affairs, he observed a scrupulous and parsimonious economy; was seen, during the usual hours of recreation, at the occupations of his trade, and in all his actions maintaining a strict punctuality and regularity of conduct, he soon drew upon him the observation of the public, and filled the town with his praises. By such arts he procured money against emergency, and friends whose patronage contributed to his future reputation and fortune.

But a short period since his arrival in Philadelphia had elapsed, when he was surprised by a visit from the governor of the province, sir William Keith, whom, by his solicitation, he accompanied to a neighbouring hotel; shared his wine and conversation, and received a general invitation to his house, which he afterwards frequented, with many tokens of kindness and hospitality. For this distinguished attention, he was indebted, especially, to the perusal of a letter he had written to a friend at New Castle, from which the governor, learning the history of his recent adventures, had conceived a favourable opinion of his spirit and abilities.

As a farther mark of his attachment, he proposed that Franklin should commence business on his own account, of-

fering in aid of the project his own influence, the interest of his friends, and the printing of the government; and urged him to return to Boston, with his recommendation, to solicit the concurrence of his father. Franklin, armed with this powerful intercession, not doubting of success, was easily prevailed on to fall in with the scheme; he therefore commenced his journey, and after an absence of seven months, re-appeared in his native town. By his relations, with the exception of the brother only, who retained a consciousness of his injurious treatment towards him, he was received with an affectionate welcome. Of his brother also he conciliated the favour, on a subsequent visit; and in retribution for the blows he had received, took in charge one of his sons, whom he instructed in his trade and established in business. In the principal object of his present visit, however, he proved unsuccessful; for his father advised him, by reason of his age and inexperience, to lay aside all further thoughts of his enterprise, and to the same effect wrote to his patron the governor. He returned, therefore, and resuming his station with his former master, pursued his trade with the same assiduous attention. The notice he received from the great stimulated his industry, and added to the prepossessions which the public already entertained in his favour.

But the zeal of the governor, it appears, was not cooled by interruption. He invited Franklin still more frequently to his house, where he treated him always with the same politeness and affability, and resolved at last to acquire for himself the exclusive honour of giving success to their projected enterprise. He encouraged him to proceed by a vessel of government, then ready to sail, for London, that he might make interest with booksellers, and, under his patronage, procure such materials as were requisite for his establishment; a proposition which Franklin readily accepted: and full of

gratitude to his generous benefactor, embarked on his voyage; nor was it until his arrival in a foreign country, three thousand miles from his native home, that he perceived, with astonishment, no provision, not even that which the immediate exigencies of his condition required, had been made for him; that in London his patron was without credit, and that he was much less aided than dishonoured by his credentials. He was now involved in the most distressful perplexities; seduced from a prosperous business; all his other schemes interrupted, and was turned loose a stranger amidst the competition of a vast city to struggle for the means of subsistence.

This governor, it appears, being a man of good natured and officious vanity, was extremely subject to these fits of romantic benevolence. He was destitute of money, and therefore lavish of promises: and from a desire of diffusing a report of his generosity through the world, engaged himself often in schemes of patronage beyond his capacity to accomplish. He performed, however, many personal services, and where money was not required, was a man of unbounded liberality. Franklin, therefore, notwithstanding the rude imposition practised upon his inexperience, entertained against him no lasting animosity; but writes in his Memoirs, of the many wise laws which he made; of his excellent capacity for government, and the many worthy qualities which he possessed, to redeem his trivial imperfections.

Franklin was much embarrassed concerning the measures which, in this difficult emergency, he ought to pursue; but had too much force of character, had been too much accustomed to vicissitude, and was too fertile in expedient, to sink into a pusillanimous dejection. Upon the whole, this disappointment, as it furnished him the opportunity of increasing his acquaintance with the world; of improving the essen tial knowledge of his profession; and of resuming, on his return

to America, his career with greater confidence and prospects of success, is to be regarded only as a temporary calamity.

He obtained employment in one of the most considerable printing houses in London, and by his industry soon secured the esteem and favour of his patrons. By his temperate habits and rigid economy he procured, not only a decent subsistence for himself, but the means also of relieving the necessities of his friends. Ralph, one of his literary associates of Philadelphia, having, in the sunshine of his magnificent hopes, become the companion of his voyage, was now involved in his calamities, and having no other trade than that of an author, was prevented from starving, wholly by his benefactions. This Ralph, who remained in England the remainder of his life, having sustained many valiant struggles against poverty, received at last a pension from the British government, as historian; and by an officious libel upon Pope, has established, in the Dunciad, his reputation as a poet.

During his short residence in London, Franklin pursued his private studies with so much diligence, and discovered so generous an ambition for literary improvement, as caused him to be regarded by the ingenious part of his acquaintance with great partiality. He obtained, by subscription, access to an extensive library, and was prompted by some occasional interests of the subject, or by an impertinent inclination for scribbling, to compose a small pamphlet upon Deistical Metaphysics. This served, at that time, to diffuse his name amongst the multitude, and procured him a favourable introduction to several persons of distinguished infidelity; amongst others, to Mandeville, who hailed him as a youth of very promising abilities.

This youthful levity on the subject of religion, when he had acquired a riper age and more ample intelligence, he

emphatically condemned; but the extreme aversion which, in common with all men of honest feelings, he entertained for that senseless dogmatism and mischievous intolerance which prevailed amongst the sects of his time, in America as well as in Europe, led him sometimes to express sentiments on religious subjects, that were not always approved. Honest men he believed, without any regard to religious denominations, were equally entitled to esteem, and he even procured at Philadelphia, the establishment of a church, in which all sects might worship according to the dictates of their own conscience. He insisted that in discussing the mysteries of our faith, much less time should be spent than in practising the duties which it enjoins; and, indeed, in all the business of his life, in morals and politics, as well as religion, he was much more an advocate for practice than speculation. Of the pure and innocent service of the Deity, however, and of the essential doctrines of christianity, no man has ever spoken with a more pious and submissive reverence; and with a conduct so pre-eminently virtuous as that of Franklin, we should offer an injury to religion, in supposing him an enemy to its prevalence or a stranger to its benignity.

Having resided for a year and a half in the British capital, and growing tired of the uniformity of his life, he concerted a scheme, with an enterprising companion, of travelling through the continent of Europe. Another project, also, he had in view, of establishing a school of natation; some feats of activity having spread an admiration for his skill in that art amongst the nobility; but by the accidental intervention of a mercantile acquaintance, who was at this time preparing merchandise to be transported to Pennsylvania, these designs were interrupted. By a promise of contributing to his future elevation in business, he was solicited by this friend to ac-

company him as a clerk; an offer, which his natural prepossessions in favour of his native country did not permit him to refuse; and on the twenty-second of July, 1726, they set sail for America.

During the leisure of this voyage, he employed himself in marking down its incidents in a journal, and having now reached the twenty-first year of his age, and thinking it unbecoming the character of man, to whom heaven has imparted intelligence and reason, to fluctuate without a design through life, he resolved to form some plan for his future conduct, by which he might promote his fortune, and procure respect and reputation in society. This plan is prefaced by the following reflections. "Those who write of the art of poetry, teach us, that if we would write what would be worth the reading, we ought always, before we begin, to form a regular design of our piece; otherwise we shall be in danger of incongruity. I am apt to think it is the same as to life. I have never fixed a regular design in life; by which means it has been a confused variety of different scenes. I am now entering upon a new one: let me, therefore, make some resolutions, and form some scheme of action, that, henceforth, I may live in all respects like a rational creature."

To these remarks he annexed a series of rules and moral principles, which, at the same time, they show his noble ardour for virtue, may afford to others, animated with the same spirit, no unprofitable example. They are partly as follow:

"I resolve to be extremely frugal for some time, until I pay what I owe.

"To speak the truth in every instance, and give no one expectations that are not likely to be answered, but aim at sincerity in every word and action—the most amiable excellence in a rational being.

"To apply myself industriously in whatever business I take in hand, and not divert my mind by any foolish project of growing suddenly rich; for industry and patience are the surest means of plenty.

"I resolve to speak ill of no man whatever, not even in a matter of truth; but rather by some means excuse the faults I hear charged upon others, and, upon proper occasions, speak all the good I know of every body, &c."

To these resolutions, although they were formed in the ardour of a youthful imagination, he adhered, with a scrupulous fidelity; and the foundation, we must admit, was not unworthy of the superstructure he afterwards reared upon it.

He arrived in Philadelphia on the eleventh of October, and embarked upon his new-adopted profession. By his application to business he soon gained the esteem and favour of his employer, was about to be appointed supercargo to the West Indies, and already entertained magnificent hopes of prosperous fortune. We cannot doubt, with the qualities of industry, economy, and enterprise which marked his character, that, by pursuing this business, he had transcended the usual honours of the counting house; but the sudden decease of his patron interrupted all his dreams of affluence and felicity; he was once more thrown out of employment, and sunk again into the obscurity of a journeyman printer.

He entered the service of his former master, a man of noted insolence and ignorance; from whom, at the expiration of a few months, he was impelled by rude treatment to a separation; an event which exposed him, for a while, to new vexations and difficulties, but served to hasten the accomplishment of a more important scheme which had principally occupied his mind,—the establishing of business on his own account. By the incessant fluctuation of his life this project appeared indeed to be attended with little probability of suc-

cess; but the knowledge he had acquired of his profession happily supplied his pecuniary deficiency, and procured him a partner, more fortunate and less skilful, who furnishing the means requisite to the enterprise, he was enabled, at last, to bring this great object of his wishes to a happy issue.

The prospect now opened to his view furnished a more powerful incentive to his ambition; and having to encounter, in the commencement of his business, a competition with others long since established, it is in this emergency of his life, that he employed the most indefatigable and laborious activity. From the earliest to the latest hours, he was seen busied in the objects of his trade; in the composition of types, preparing of stationary, and often transporting it in a wheelbarrow through the streets of the city; abstaining not only from the common recreations of his age, but even from his favourite passion of reading, except in the secrecy of the night, lest he should incur the imputation of indolence or dissipation. This studious gravity of deportment, carried so far beyond what is usual to his age, and so congenial to the demure and stately habits which prevailed, at that time, in the society in which he lived; added to the punctuality and fidelity with which he fulfilled his engagements, soon procured him a very extensive and honourable acquaintance. These enabled him to give extension to his business; and at last to get rid of a worthless partner, who embarrassed his plans and operations.

In the preceding portion of his life, he had subsisted wholly at the mercy of fortune; exposed to a perpetual vicissitude of inspiring hopes and vexatious disappointments. From this period, the obstructions which had hitherto limited his genius, and prejudiced his interests, were in a great measure removed; and in his subsequent career, though circumvented by many difficulties and engaged perpetually in the most complicated or dan-

gerous enterprises, he conducted them all with uniform success and felicity, and advanced with a firm and undeviating step in the progress of fortune and preferment. In reviewing this period of his history, he has remarked with a generous pride, that he had passed through the storms of youth, notwithstanding his exposure to evil company, with an unsullied reputation, and under the pressure of the most imminent necessities; that he had used no cringing submissions; or resorted to no meanness of expedient for a subsistence.

In 1730 he married a lady whose maiden name was Read; whom he had courted before his departure for England, had forgotten during his absence, and now espoused in her widowhood. She had suffered many injuries from the volatile affections of a former husband; with the present one she lived in full enjoyment of connubial harmony, and by her virtues, as well as by her misfortunes, appears to have merited so auspicious a connexion. To others Franklin has recommended his own example of early marriage, as an incitement to industry, a pledge of honesty, and especially, as a preventive against disreputable attachments; from which he was himself not entirely exempt. An advice which, as long as the means of existence are practicable, as it corresponds with the dispositions of human nature, will rarely be questioned or disobeyed. But when communities have reached that degree of depravation, in which wealth only is revered and virtuous poverty is neglected; when industry is no longer a safeguard from contempt or misery; this doctrine of Franklin, under many circumstances, becomes a just subject of reprobation.

Soon after his return to America he instituted, in connexion with several young men of respectable character and abilities, a club, of which he has spoken with great affection in his Memoirs, denominated "The Junto," in which were dis-

cussed scientific, moral, and political subjects; an association which endured with undiminished reputation for thirty years, and was at last succeeded by the present Philosophical Society. It had a very salutary influence in promoting economy, virtue and public institutions; and not only in creating a literary emulation amongst its members, but in diffusing a curiosity for letters in the community. Of the beneficent nature of the club, a conjecture may be drawn from the questions which preceded their debates; some of which are as follow:

"Have you met with any thing, in the author you last read, remarkable, or suitable to be communicated to the Junto? particularly in history, morality, poetry, physic, travels, mechanic arts, or other parts of knowledge.

"Do you know any fellow-citizen, who has lately done a worthy action, deserving praise and imitation? or who has lately committed an error, proper for us to be warned against and avoid?

"What unhappy effects of intemperance have you lately observed or heard of? of imprudence? of passion? or of any other vice or folly?

"What happy effects of temperance? of prudence? of moderation? or of any other virtue?

"Do you think of any thing at present, in which the Junto may be serviceable to mankind? to their country, to their friends, or to themselves?

"Hath any deserving stranger arrived in town since last meeting, that you heard of? and what have you heard or observed of his character or merits? and whether think you, it lies in the power of the Junto to oblige him, or encourage him as he deserves?

"Do you know of any deserving young beginner lately set up, whom it lies in the power of the Junto any way to encourage?

"Have you lately observed any encroachment on the just liberties of the people?

"Hath any body attacked your reputation lately? and what can the Junto do towards securing it?

"Is there any man whose friendship you want, and which the Junto, or any of them, can procure for you?

"Have you lately heard any member's character attacked, and how have you defended it?"

As a qualification of admission, it was required also, that each member should answer to the following questions:

"Do you sincerely declare that you love mankind in general; of what profession or religion soever?

"Do you think any person ought to be harmed in his body, name, or goods, for mere speculative opinions, or his external way of worship?

"Do you love truth for truth's sake, and will you endeavour impartially to find and receive it yourself and communicate it to others?"

The exigencies in which Franklin had passed his early youth, and the expedients he was forced to employ, that he might improve his fortune, drew him from all barren speculations towards those only, which might tend to ameliorate the condition and happiness of his species. All his leading enterprises appear to have been undertaken with a view to the public good; and even to those which might seem indifferent, he gave the same tendency. From incidents however minute, he extracted some salutary moral which had escaped vulgar observation. To practise virtue and propagate it amongst mankind, he considered as the common business of his life, nor did he suffer any effort which might contribute to that purpose to remain unemployed. Like Lycurgus, he wished that the praise of virtue and contempt of vice should be inter-

woven with all the actions and discourses of men, and that such images as tended to elevate the fancy and enlighten the understanding, should be perpetually exhibited to their observation. Even upon the current coin of the country, as it was exposed to the frequent inspection of the multitude, he advised that instead of the image of a king or an emperor, some pious or prudential maxim should be engraven, which might leave a salutary impression upon the mind.

In 1732, he commenced, and continued for twenty-five years, the publication of "Poor Richard's Almanac;" a work of modest pretension and of humble title, which his fertile genius rendered, in addition to its utility as a calendar, subservient to the most essential interests of the community; especially by the diffusion of instruction amongst that class of the people, who by their poverty or laborious occupations, are usually deprived of this advantage. Those spaces which, in a work of that kind, are commonly filled with useless memorials, or unmeaning observations, he occupied with moral sentences, precepts of economy, rules for the preservation of health, and such general principles of instruction as were most accommodated to the purposes of common life; and these he clothed in a familiarity of expression, a proverbial brevity and simplicity, which rendered them acceptable to the humblest as well as the most improved capacity. Of this Almanac, ten thousand copies were distributed in America every year. The last, of 1757, in which he collected the principal matter of the preceding numbers, was republished in various forms in Great Britain, and thence translated into foreign languages, was dispersed and read with great avidity throughout the whole continent of Europe.

This sententious method, for which his writings and conversations show that he entertained a constant partiality, is, perhaps, the most efficient as well as most popular mode that

could be devised for the inculcation of knowledge; for a truth thus conveyed, is not only recommended by poignancy and precision of expression, but standing independent, and as it were, a corollary from the experience of life, is retained by the memory when more elaborate reasonings are forgotten.

To his printing establishment, he attached, about this time, a newspaper; which, besides the discussion of politics, he replenished with productions of poetry, history, eloquence, and such other subjects of polite literature, as he supposed would improve the taste and morals of his country. This paper, it is said, he kept unpolluted by scurrility, malignant personalities, or indecent arrogance, and sustained it in reputation, in those days, without departing from the sober rules of propriety.

In considering how much enthusiasm, in politics and religion, is often excited by the association of men into parties, he conceived a project of creating a sect to inculcate the moral obligation, and to watch over the interests of virtue. This design he embraced with great zeal and alacrity, but the multiplicity of his business did not permit him to carry it into operation; nor is there any great reason to suppose that all his influence and activity had ever brought it to a successful conclusion. It was, however, the invention of a generous mind, and must add to our admiration of his character. It would, indeed, be a great blessing to humanity, could such a scheme of philanthropy be accomplished; could the honest part of the species, with the same ardour and unanimity, be united for the protection of the social welfare, as knaves and profligates for the destruction of it.

Having committed several of the leading principles of this honest enterprise to paper, he has preserved them in his memoirs. Amongst other objects, there is a religious creed,

which he had intended to be subscribed by each member, expressed in the following words:

"I believe that there is one God, who made all things.

"That he governs the world by his providence.

"That he ought to be worshipped by adoration, prayer, and thanksgiving.

"But that the most acceptable service to God, is doing good to man.

"That the soul is immortal.

"And that God will certainly reward virtue and punish vice, either here or hereafter."

Believing that those who attempt a reformation of the world, should themselves be irreproachable, he very reasonably accompanied his splendid theory of popular reform, by a rigid scrutiny of his private conduct. For this purpose he had recourse to an expedient with which he was for some time greatly enamoured; by the means of which, it appears, he even entertained the hope of arriving at "moral perfection." Having written upon a tabular catalogue, all those virtues which he thought essential to the perfection of the human character, he made upon this scale, every evening, a diligent examination of his conduct during each day; a practice which he pursued with his usual inflexibility of resolution, until such habits were confirmed as rendered this circumspection unnecessary; and although he fell short of his ultimate ambition, he ascribes to "this little artifice" much of the happiness of his life. Those who attempt impracticable objects, often accomplish purposes to which human frailty were otherwise inadequate. Of the process he observed in this enterprise, he has left in his life a circumstantial detail, which will be perused, at least by those who are emulous of this species of glory, with applause and admiration.

In the mean time he remitted nothing of his usual diligence in literary application. A few hours of each day were set apart for study, during which he qualified himself for discussing the political interests of his country. He acquired also a competent knowledge of the Italian and Spanish languages, and of the Latin, the rudiments of which he had been taught in his early youth. He studied, likewise, the French, and attained a greater proficiency in that language than is usually acquired by a foreigner; for he composed with accuracy, and conversed with almost the fluency of a native. Amongst his confederates of the "Junto," he obtained a small collection of books, for the purpose of reference in their debates, to which many volumes being occasionally superadded, he procured, at length, the establishment of the Philadelphia Library. This was the first institution of the kind in America; but from its manifest convenience and utility, the example was soon followed through the other towns of the provinces, and had a sensible influence, it is said, upon the manners of the inhabitants; for, the people being yet unemployed in less innocent recreations, undebauched by the vices of luxury and avarice, and unoppressed by necessities, reading became every where the fashionable amusement, spreading its influence even to the humblest ranks of common life.

He published, in 1729, a pamphlet very highly approved, "concerning the Nature and Necessity of Paper Currency;" and employed otherwise his credit in promoting the use of that money; by which he acquired great favour with the public. He published about the same time, various essays in his newspaper upon popular topics, which being written in his usual fascinating manner, and the emulation of parties bringing them into notice, contributed also to the extension of his reputation. He was appointed by the government of

Pennsylvania, official printer; his subscriptions increased, and he began to entertain every day more flattering views of futurity.

In 1736, he was chosen clerk of the general assembly, and in the following year, postmaster of Philadelphia; and being no longer overwhelmed by the blasting influence of domestic necessities, his genius began from this time to emerge, and to be employed in schemes of public utility. His first enterprises of municipal improvement, were to organise fire companies, to reform the watch of the city, and procure the paving and lighting of the streets; all of which, by his perseverance, he brought to a successful termination. He concerted and carried into complete success, in 1736, the establishment of the "American Philosophical Society," and of a college for the regular education of youth, none existing at that time in the colony, which by successive amplification and improvement, produced the present University of Pennsylvania. He procured, also, a grant from the legislature, for the establishment and endowment of the Pennsylvania Hospital; and so much, indeed, did he contribute to the ornament, benefit and glory of this city, that he may justly be considered as its second founder: of a city, which, by the influence of a few superior minds, has become the metropolis of this continent; and in the multitude of its benevolent institutions, in the arts of luxury and a numerous population at least, if not in love of science, or gratitude to its benefactors, may, at a period not very remote, emulate the most illustrious cities of the world.

It may not be amiss in this place to remark, how essentially, and how far perhaps, beyond what men are apt to imagine, are the interests of states influenced by the wisdom, the virtue and industry of a few eminent individuals. To seek our examples from the history of antiquity, we shall find that in Greece, the cities of Argos and Mycenæ, with equal in-

dustry and greater advantages of position than Sparta, perished in turbulence and faction, without having achieved any memorable action to perpetuate their name; whilst the latter country, by the wisdom of a single legislator, flourishes with everlasting glory. The influence of the instruction, and the example of this one man, formed the minds of all that multitude of statesmen and warriors of his country, who succeeded him; and whose eminent virtues and heroic actions, have been transmitted to memory as the pride and ornament of the human species. But for Epaminondas and his brave compeer, Thebes had been known only as the birth-place of Pindar and Plutarch. Rome was indebted for her freedom, and, in the most critical emergencies of her history, for her preservation, to the auspicious intervention of individuals; and when her republican virtues were almost extinct, one man kept alive the expiring embers of her liberty, and sustained, for a while, the tottering fabric of her overgrown power. Modern history furnishes not less pertinent examples, which it may be superfluous or invidious to enumerate.

It must not be forgotten that Franklin promoted, also, the honour and interests of the whole province of Pennsylvania, at this time, by providing for it a system of military discipline; an object which, by the impolitic religious scruples of the legislature, had been totally neglected; although it had been imperiously requisite for protecting the frontier from the atrocious massacres to which it was exposed from the invasions of the savages. To accomplish this enterprise, he first published a pamphlet, by which he disposed the public mind to favourable impressions; he then drew up articles of a military association, and procured their adoption in a convocation of the people; by the influence of which ten thousand men were soon assembled for the defence of their country; and under his auspices were trained to the use and ex-

ercise of arms. A commission offered him, of high rank in the Philadelphia regiment, he refused in favour of a person whom he supposed more competent to the discharge of its duties. Batteries were, at the same time, erected under his inspection, at the entrance of the town, from the proceeds of a lottery which had been procured for that purpose by his instigation and management; and to so great a height of reputation had he now grown, for experience and capacity, that no scheme of public good was deemed rational, unless he had approved it; and no important enterprise will be found, which during those days was not conducted by his counsel and direction.

In 1741, he commenced the publication of a "General Magazine and Historical Chronicle for the British Plantations," which he conducted in addition to his Gazette. This work, to render it acceptable to the dogmatic spirit of his readers, is much interlarded and disfigured by controversial divinity; there is, however, much useful matter, moral, historical, and scientific, which does honour to the capacity and industry of the author. Nor were these labours unrewarded, for he received from all sides the most flattering and spontaneous testimonies of esteem, and from every branch of the administration the highest deference was paid to his opinions and authority.

The common and useful arts of life, whatever might be the nature of his leading occupations, never failed to occupy some portion of his time and attention. He composed, and in 1742 published a treatise upon the improvement of chimneys; and contrived at the same time a stove, of very ingenious construction, of which he made a present to the public, and which has not been supplanted by any subsequent invention.

The great diligence which he observed in the duties already assigned him in the government, and the eminent abilities he

had discovered in conceiving and conducting enterprises useful to the state, advanced very rapidly his claims to preferment. By the governor, he was commissioned justice of the peace; soon afterwards alderman; and by the corporation was appointed one of the common council of the city. He was elected, in 1744, a member of the provincial legislature, and so unlimited a popularity did he obtain in that assembly, notwithstanding his deficient eloquence as a public speaker, that his election was repeated for ten years without the solicitation of a vote. He possessed, in an eminent degree, the talent of gaining men's affections; and if we consider how essential are the arts of insinuation to the accomplishment of all honest and useful enterprises, it must be allowed that to practise them skilfully is not the last degree of praise.

It is at this period that we are to notice the rise and progress of his philosophical reputation. In 1747, he had accidentally witnessed at Boston, a few experiments exhibited by some itinerant Scotchmen upon electricity, which, though imperfectly performed, awakened his curiosity to that subject. Upon his return to Philadelphia, he repeated the same experiments with complete success, and adding others, of which he had received some account from England, the science, at length, wholly occupied his ambition. Thus by a trivial accident were elicited discoveries, which soon afterwards diffused his fame through the world, and drew upon his native country the regard and attention of all Europe.

Having acquired a dexterity in performing those experiments, which had recently employed the philosophers of the old world, he first accounted for various phenomena that were yet unexplained, and soon afterwards added some new and important discoveries of his own; such as of the power of points, in eliciting and throwing off the accumulated fluid; and of the negative and positive state of electricity. About the year

1745, he discovered various properties of the Leyden Vial; as the means of accumulating, retaining, and discharging any quantity of the electric matter with safety; an account of which he transmitted to London to his friend Mr. Collinson, in 1747. He was the first who fired gunpowder, gave magnetism to needles of steel, melted metals and killed animals of considerable size, by means of electricity.

From his various observations upon this fluid, he was at length induced to imagine its identity with lightning. He attempted, therefore, to explain, upon this principle, the theory of thunder-gusts, and of the Aurora Borealis; and in 1749 conceived the design, the most sublime perhaps that has entered into the imagination of man, of drawing from the heavens its lightning, and conducting its terrific energy, harmless into the bowels of the earth.

The following is the account of this experiment, by Dr. Priestley, whose eminence in physical knowledge, and intimacy with Franklin, enabled him to give its particulars with minuteness and precision.

"Franklin, after having published his method of verifying his hypothesis concerning the sameness of electricity with the matter of lightning, was waiting for the erection of a spire in Philadelphia to carry his views into execution, not imagining that a pointed rod of a moderate height, could answer the purpose; when it occurred to him, that by means of a common kite, he could have a readier and better access to the regions of thunder than by any spire whatever. Preparing, therefore, a large silk handkerchief, and two cross sticks, of a proper length, on which to extend it, he took the opportunity of the first approaching thunder-storm to take a walk into the field, in which there was a shed convenient for his purpose. But dreading the ridicule which too commonly attends unsuccessful attempts in science, he communicated his

intended experiment to nobody but his son, who assisted him in raising the kite.

"The kite being raised, a considerable time elapsed before there was any appearance of its being electrified. One very promising cloud had passed over it without any effect; when, at length, just as he was beginning to despair of his contrivance, he observed some loose threads of the hempen string to stand erect, and to avoid one another, just as if they had been suspended on a common conductor. Struck with this favourable appearance, he immediately presented his knuckle to the key,—and let the reader judge of the exquisite pleasure he must have felt at that moment,—the discovery was complete. He perceived a very evident electric spark. Others succeeded even before the string was wet, so as to put the matter past all dispute; and when the rain had wet the string, he collected electric fire very copiously. This happened in June, 1752, a month after the electricians in France had verified the same theory, but before he had heard of any thing they had done."

A relation of these experiments was communicated by Franklin himself, in letters to a friend in London. "Nothing," says Priestley, "was ever written on the subject of electricity more justly admired, in all parts of Europe, than these letters. Electricians every where employed themselves in repeating his experiments, or exhibiting them for money. All the world, in a manner, even kings themselves, flocked to see them, and all retired full of admiration for the inventor of them." In New England, by Yale College and that of Cambridge, a degree of Master of Arts was conferred upon him, in honour of his discoveries. By the Royal Society of London they were at first treated with a heedless or malignant inattention. On the continent, they were made public by the celebrated Buffon. The experiments were repeated before

Louis XV. by M. De Loz, and were verified by many other philosophers; in Turin, by Father Beccaria; in Russia, by Professor Richmann, who, in the experiment of the kite, perished by a stroke of lightning.

The reputation of Franklin had now become too notorious, not to excite, among the learned, some feelings of jealousy; for the votaries of the muses, though the great business of their lives is the refinement of sentiment, or the cultivation of reason and humanity, are not more exempt than other men from some of the most illiberal and malignant passions of human nature. In France, he met a transient but violent opposition from the Abbé Nollet; and the professors of England especially, attempted to detract from his praises; using many fruitless endeavours to invalidate the truth of his experiments, and finally to rob him of the honours of originality. But Franklin, in his scientific as well as his political career, though armed with all that good sense, that keen and sarcastic wit which had insured him credit in a critical altercation, opposed his adversaries only by silence, and left to the peaceful but sure operation of time, the task of vindicating his merit. This he has himself given as a rule of prudence, as well as of magnanimity, and his own example has justified the wisdom of his policy; for the world is now filled with his fame, and his praises have ceased to excite envy or opposition.

It cannot be expected that we should here enumerate all the experiments that he has made, or the treatises he has composed on the various branches of science; for there is scarcely any one that has not occupied some portion of his attention. He made several curious experiments upon the effects of oil in stilling the waters of the ocean; to ascertain whether boats are not drawn with more difficulty in small canals, than in great bodies of water; to improve the art of

swimming; and to prove that thirst may be allayed by bathing in sea water. He made observations, also, in his voyages to Europe, on the gradual progress of the north-east storms, along the American coast, contrary to the direction of the winds; and likewise, for the benefit of navigation, made experiments on the course, velocity and temperature of the Gulf Stream. He made, also, curious observations upon the air; upon the relative powers of metals in the conducting of heat; and upon the different degrees acquired by congenial bodies of various colours, from the rays of the sun. He composed likewise an ingenious treatise upon the formation of the earth, and the existence of a universal fluid. Music, also, he cultivated with success, and wrote many letters on that science with great ingenuity. He revived and improved the Harmonica, and performed with taste upon that instrument. But we must now return to the narrative of his political transactions.

It was the peculiar advantage of Franklin, from his early youth, to have mingled business with study and speculation. Such was more frequently the education of the ancients. Some of their most famous poets were generals and admirals. Xenophon, Thucydides, and even Socrates, fought the battles of their respective countries, and enjoyed the highest trust in the administration of their governments. In modern manners the scholar, from a deficiency of practical experience or a love of solitude, is mostly unequal to the humblest employments, and often sinks under his load of erudition to obscurity, whilst more superficial qualities rise to the first honours of the state.

In 1758, he was sent by the provincial assembly to conclude a treaty with the Indians at Carlisle; and in the following year was appointed on a more important mission to Albany, where the British government had assembled a con-

gress of commissioners to confer upon a plan of defence for the colonies, against the threatened hostilities of the French, and the incursions of the savages. While on his journey to this place, he devised and reduced to writing, a project for the coalition of the colonies, as far as might be requisite to their defence, under a single administration. A president for this general government, according to his plan, was to be appointed by the crown; a grand council by the provincial assemblies; and amongst the constitutional duties of the assembly, that of laying taxes was especially assigned to the representatives of the people.

But this measure, notwithstanding the unanimous concurrence of the congress, was, by the provincial legislatures, almost unanimously rejected, as affording to the royal officers an authority too ample and dangerous; and the British ministers, on the other hand, had too much discernment not to discover that the tendency of such a union was unfavourable to their designs of government; which, at the same time that it afforded to the colonies vigour and protection from their enemy, furnished them, by placing them in a military posture, the means of resisting the sovereignty of the mother country. It was therefore rejected with equal promptitude on their part, as "savouring too much of democracy." It was then resolved, after deliberation, as an expedient more safe and prudent, that the measures of defence should be committed to the governors and their councils, who were generally under the implicit control of the British government; and that the sums expended in that object should be reimbursed by act of parliament laying a tax upon the colonies. To this scheme, especially the latter part of it, Franklin exerted the most strenuous opposition, during which he discovered, as subsequent events have testified, the most intimate acquaintance with the interests and passions of his

countrymen. In his correspondence with the governor of Massachusetts, on this subject, not only did he employ all the leading arguments that were urged with greater diffusion during the revolution, but predicted, with the most unerring precision, all the fatal consequences that would result to the British government from such impolitic pretensions.

About this time he was appointed, upon the decease of the deputy postmaster general of America, to supply his place in that office; an office hitherto unproductive, but which, by various improvements, and by prudence and dexterity of management, he rendered a very fruitful source of revenue to the crown. In this station he afforded to general Braddock the most substantial aid in carrying on his operations against Fort Du Quesne: not only by personal services, which were left without any other reward than the thanks and approbation of the general, but by contributions of money, which, by the issue of that wild and fatal expedition, and the negligence of the British government, were never repaid.

By the defeat of Braddock, the whole province was exposed to the inroads of the barbarians and French, who extended even to the interior of the country their devastations and ravages. Profiting by the occasion, Franklin introduced into the assembly a bill for the establishing and training a voluntary militia; an object, which, as he pursued it with eagerness, and as the fears of the majority prevailed over their religious scruples, he was enabled, after many exertions, successfully to accomplish. He afterwards raised, at the solicitation of the governor, a small body of troops, which he marched to the protection of the frontier; performing a campaign which required, indeed, much labour and diligence, but which furnished little opportunity for the acquisition of glory, or the display of military abilities.

Having erected the necessary fortifications, he was recalled to a scene of life more congenial to his habits and inclinations. In military affairs he usually pleaded incapacity; and having been altogether bred up to civil pursuits, it is probable that the technical operations of war had engaged no considerable share of his attention. He possessed, however, beyond doubt, many of the great talents of a soldier; courage, stratagem, patience, and activity; and had his inclinations led him to the profession of arms, he had not served his country, in that capacity, without glory.

By the contentions which for a long period had existed between the people of Pennsylvania and the proprietary government, and which the present exigencies of the state had increased to an unusual height of animosity, Franklin was called to a more important theatre for the exertion of his abilities; and now, for the first time, engaged in those political competitions and factions which engrossed, almost without intermission, the residue of his life.

Of the American colonies, some, from their origin, had enjoyed the privilege of choosing their own executive and judicial officers; and by this benignity of fortune advanced, without discord or obstruction, in the career of their prosperity; amongst the rest, the executive authority was either vested in the crown, which gave birth to many furious contentions, that often impeded the most salutary measures of the administration; or finally, was delegated, by charter, to individuals, who under the denomination of proprietors, exerted this power by themselves or deputies, and transmitted it to their posterity; which latter system of policy proved least compatible with the happiness of the people. Thus the Carolinas languished for half a century under the counsels of the proprietors, and flourished only when relieved from

the influence of their inauspicious and aristocratical domination.

Under the auspices of its illustrious founder, this system of government, in Pennsylvania, was not unprosperous; but became too ponderous and unwieldy for the less potent arm of his successors to sustain it. The venerable illusions which had supported the institutions of Penn were, in the age of Franklin, no longer effectual; men were now to be governed by mere human authority, and to be deceived by less holy and innocent expedients. The great dispute now in agitation, was occasioned by an attempt of the proprietors to exonerate their private estates from taxation, and their refusing to give their sanction, even in times of extreme necessity, to the appropriations for the defence of the province, unless this immunity were confirmed. Franklin arrayed himself, with eagerness, against the pretensions of the executive; and from his abilities as a writer, and extensive popularity, soon became their most formidable antagonist. The proprietary faction, sensible of the weight of his influence, set themselves with emulation to conciliate his favour. All that could manifest their extreme affection for him; expressions of civility, protestations of regard, offers of preferment, with all the persuasions of gentle language, they employed to propitiate his good will or deprecate his hostility. But Franklin, who of all men living, was least subject to that softness of human nature, which renders honest men the dupes or instruments of knavery, pursued, without deviation, his honourable purpose.

At length the pertinacity with which the proprietors urged their pretensions, drove the assembly to refer their cause to the jurisdiction of the mother country, and Franklin was appointed to proceed thither as advocate of the province. He

undertook this office without reluctance, embarked upon his voyage in June, and arrived in London in July, 1757.

In entering upon this negotiation, he was opposed by obstacles that were to be overcome by no ordinary diligence. The great war carried on at this time in Germany, left to the English ministers neither leisure nor inclination to attend to these subordinate interests; and the proprietors also, anticipating the measures of their adversaries, had resorted, in the mean time, to artifice to prop up their iniquitous government. The inhabitants of the provinces, and especially the legislative assemblies, they had represented as an ignorant, factious and ungovernable rabble, and by the means of the public journals as well as by private slanders, had filled the nation with various reports unfavourable to their character. Thus in Pennsylvania, and by similar causes in the other colonies, were sown the first seeds of that supercilious contempt, which Englishmen have been pleased to manifest towards their kinsmen of America; which during the revolutionary war kindled many rancorous and malignant passions, and yet entertains amongst a people designed to live in amity and affection with each other, feelings of the most bitter animosity and resentment.

The task of Franklin was, therefore, on this occasion, not only to enlighten the ignorant and animate the indifferent, but to dissipate prejudices, and to repress the calumnies of those who desired to encroach upon the interests of his clients. In the execution of this task, the consideration which he already enjoyed as a man of letters and science, by procuring him the acquaintance of many powerful individuals of the government, afforded him very important facilities. He also made use, in his turn, of the public journals, in which he combated with great ability, the efforts of his opponents; representing their administration not only as destructive to the

colonial interests, but reproachful to the character of the British nation. Finding it, however, necessary to descend to an explication more minute and definite on this subject, he published, in 1759, the "Historical Review of Pennsylvania," in which he traced the whole policy of the proprietary government, through its progressive stages, up to his own time. This work, which was published anonymously, as a composition is considered to be inferior to the generality of his writings; but notwithstanding the uninteresting nature of the subject, and the haste in which it was composed, there appeared sufficient of the good sense of Franklin, and of the sprightliness of his genius, to draw upon it the attention of the public; and it is supposed to have contributed very essentially to the success of the negotiation. The proprietary party at least, whatever may have been the cause, gradually abated their pretensions, and assented to such terms of accommodation as satisfied the wishes of the province.

The turbulence and disorders arising from these frequent contentions of the colonies with their governors, were in a great degree counterbalanced by many beneficial consequences. They created, amongst the people, a propensity to political discussions, taught them to reason upon the principles of government, upon their constitutional privileges and relations with the mother country, and nourished that spirit of liberty, which bore them with so much felicity through the perils of their glorious and important revolution.

The excellent capacity for business which Franklin discovered in this negotiation greatly increased his popularity amongst his countrymen; and he was now entrusted with the additional agencies of Massachusetts, Georgia, and Maryland; it spread also his reputation more extensively through England, and consequently enlarged the circle of his usefulness in that country. He formed connexions with a great

number of persons of eminent rank and influence; and profiting by their intimacy, and by the observations his situation enabled him to make upon mankind; upon the policy of states and arts of life; qualified himself to perform, with distinction and success, the many enterprises in which he afterwards engaged for the interest and glory of his country.

He travelled, at this time, into Scotland, and there, as in England, cultivated several useful acquaintances. He contracted a friendship with lord Kaimes, which, notwithstanding the intervening storms and turbulence of the revolution, subsisted with intimate familiarity until the termination of their lives; and his letters to that distinguished scholar form a very pleasing and instructive portion of his published correspondence. He was now elected, with special honours, a member of the Royal Society, and was admitted to the highest degrees in some of the Scotch and English universities.

A party, at this period, existed in England, who sought to draw off the attention of the British cabinet from the war of Germany, in which the impolicy of the administration had unprosperously employed the British forces and exhausted the national treasures, to the conquest of the French possessions in America. With these, Franklin united his endeavours; and possessing a minute knowledge of the country; a species of knowledge, too, in which the wisest statesmen of England had shown a shameful deficiency; he became instrumental in projecting and carrying into effect the expedition against Canada under general Wolfe. He published, likewise, a pamphlet to favour the same object, which, rendering the enterprise a subject of more general attention, had no inconsiderable influence, we may reasonably suppose, in the final acquisition of that territory to the British government.

By this conquest his countrymen were not only relieved from the vicinity of a dangerous enemy, which for half a century had occupied them with perpetual wars and alarms; and procured leisure to attend to their domestic politics; but acquired, during the warlike operations of this contest, a respectable share of military discipline, and a consciousness of their own strength, by a comparison with the British troops and with those of their enemy; and if we admit also that a spirit of revenge for the loss of their provinces, prompted the French to a more willing alliance with the Americans during the revolution, we must regard this conquest as no inconsiderable event in the production of our independence.

During this residence in England, he visited the birth-place of his father in Northamptonshire, where he inquired, with a pious curiosity, into the history of his family; and, from the humble records of their native village, has given a very favourable representation of their character. Besides moral integrity, good sense, and mechanical ingenuity, for which they were held in universal repute, some, it appears, had given indications of more than ordinary genius, as theologians, orators, and even poets; and one by his skill in law and politics had attracted the notice and patronage of lord Halifax. From some of his immediate predecessors he has traced likewise a resemblance to many of the prominent features of his own character; and, in all the members of the family, we may indeed observe the same strength of understanding, accuracy of discernment, and ardour of curiosity, for which he was himself so remarkably and so honourably distinguished.

In the summer of 1762, he returned to America. Upon his arrival, the assembly of Pennsylvania voted him their thanks for his meritorious services, which, as a more solid testimonial of their approbation, they accompanied with a

compensation of five thousand pounds; and as his election had been continued during his absence, he resumed, without interruption, his seat in the house.

In 1763, he travelled into the northern colonies to inspect and regulate the post offices; performing a tour of about 1600 miles. At his return he was named commissioner to raise troops for the defence of the frontier, at that time infested by the incursions of the savages. Some insurrections, also, which broke out in the interior of Pennsylvania, in which about twenty of the peaceful Indians were murdered by the inhabitants, and other acts of violence threatened, afforded him much laborious and ungrateful employment. He wrote, on this occasion, a pamphlet, which rendering the proceedings of the rioters unpopular and odious, served not a little to strengthen the arm of the administration, and restore peace to an impotent and disorderly government.

In the mean time the proprietary faction, repenting of the facility with which they had relinquished their former pretensions, began to resume them with increased importunity; and the assembly entertaining, at last, no hope that they would abandon privileges, upon which they had set so high a value, determined to petition the king for the entire abolition of their authority. Franklin, by whose counsels this measure was principally recommended, encountered a violent opposition, and by the intrigues and activity of his adversaries, was at length excluded, by a small majority, from the assembly, where he had held a predominant influence during fifteen years. The power of his friends was nevertheless prevalent in the house, and he was appointed, to the great regret of his enemies, to resume his agency at the court of England.

After having encountered many obstructions on the part of the governor and his adherents, he set sail from America

in November, 1764, and in the following month arrived, for the third time, in England; where the many friends, whom his former visits to that country had procured him, greeted his return with an affectionate welcome. After a year's residence in London, profiting by a suspension in his political business, he made an excursion into Holland and Germany, and in the year following to Paris: in which countries, even during this rapid perambulation, he formed many useful and illustrious acquaintances. In the latter place, especially, where a knowledge of his reputation was already extensively circulated, he was received with marks of unusual distinction. He was introduced to Louis XV. and to the different members of the royal family, and was entertained amongst the nobility and gentry of the court, with all that hospitality and courtesy for which the French nation is so eminently distinguished. From the members of the Academy of Sciences, of which he was soon afterwards elected an associate, and from the other literary corps, with which the French capital at that time abounded, he received the most flattering testimonials of esteem. These accumulated honours served to animate his activity, as well as to give a more ample authority to his future counsels; the knowledge, also, which he acquired of the politics, customs and fashions of the courts of Europe, enlarged the limits of his usefulness, and prepared him for that more conspicuous scene of his life, in which all the subordinate and provincial interests were soon to merge and disappear.

The famous project which the British ministers had formed of taxing their colonies, had been communicated by their agents to the provincial assembly in 1764, some time before the departure of Franklin from America; against this measure he was amongst the first and most ardent in proclaiming his opposition; and being at this time high in reputation, his

influence, we may reasonably suppose, was not ineffectual in diffusing the same sentiments amongst his countrymen. On his arrival in England, he presented a petition against the projects of the ministry, of which he had himself been the principal instigator, from the Pennsylvania assembly; and whatever additional opportunities his situation afforded him, he employed with the utmost zeal and industry, to obstruct the further progress of this law, from which he anticipated so many unhappy and fatal consequences.

And when the malignant influence of the ministry had carried their stamp act into effect, his exertions were not intermitted; but uniting with the minority, he interposed his utmost endeavours against it; first to obviate evil consequences, and finally to procure the abrogation of that noxious statute; and though his efforts were insufficient to arrest the headlong torrent by which he was opposed, they were at least not ineffectual in diminishing its destructive force and rapidity.

During the violent altercations which arose upon the merits of this subject in parliament, it was proposed by the party in opposition, in order to obtain more ample and authentic information concerning the interests and feelings of the Americans, that Franklin should be interrogated publicly before the house of commons. Accordingly on the third of February, 1766, he was summoned to attend the house for that purpose; an order which, as it afforded him a splendid opportunity of favouring the designs of the opposition and the interests of his country, he promptly and cheerfully obeyed; and to this expedient the advocates of the repeal were not a little indebted for the success of their exertions. Franklin, independent of the weight of his pre-established reputation upon public opinion, possessed, in a very eminent degree, all those natural endowments and acquired abilities, which, in such a conjuncture, would render his co-operation honoura-

ble and effectual; besides a dignity of appearance, a prompt and sagacious understanding, and a mind equally unmoved by the illusions, and undismayed by the insolence of power, he had, by the occupations of his life, acquired concerning the politics both of America and England, all that minute and extensive knowledge, which was especially requisite to the illustration of the subject in agitation.

He contrived, in concert with his friends in the house, to introduce upon this occasion, nearly all the important topics of the controversy; which he treated with a solidity and acuteness of reasoning, a diffusion of knowledge and dignity of manner, that not only extorted the commendations of his enemies, but exceeded even what his friends, in their highest admiration, had conceived of his genius and abilities.

The whole of this examination, being published, was read with the greatest avidity both in America and England. In America it produced in his favour the liveliest emotions of gratitude; and in both countries added greatly to the lustre of his reputation.

In the part, however, which he took in the first stages of this contention, it is apparent from the general tenor of his politics, that he entertained no farther design than that of vindicating the constitutional liberties of his country; and that no ambition of her independence had at this time entered his imagination. He was, indeed, sensible, as were all other men of observation, from the situation of these colonies; their increase of population, and the principles of liberty which were diffused amongst them in their first elements, and had strengthened with their growth, that they were not long destined to exist under any species of external government; and much less under a tyrannical and arbitrary authority; and if we refer to the sentiments expressed in his writings of this period, he looked forward to their independence with no

common sensibility. This event, he wished, however, to be left to the peaceful operation of time; until that period when the maturity of the colonies, and their ripened vigour, should at once justify their separation and enable them to assume the reins of self-government, without violence or convulsion. From sentiments both of reason and humanity, he therefore viewed these dissensions in their origin with anxious and melancholy apprehensions; knowing that the issue of the contest was extremely doubtful, and that an unsuccessful termination of it, if not fatal to the liberties of his country, would involve her in the most distressful calamities.

There were other motives which led him, also, to regard the introduction of the dispute, at this time, with vexation and disquietude. He held, from the bounty of the British government, a considerable office of honour and emolument; he had resided in England, where he had received many essential services, and had been entertained with the most generous civilities, during a great portion of his life; and had formed there many personal attachments: so that not only the ties of a common language, proximity of blood, and identity of laws and institutions, but every motive of affection and gratitude, concurred to influence his predilections in favour of that country.

He endeavoured, therefore, with the utmost zeal and sincerity, to effect an accommodation, and employed during his examination, and in all his writings and conversations, every argument which he supposed would tend to accomplish that honourable purpose. To the minority he endeavoured to point out the advantages both to England and America, and especially to England, of preserving union and harmony between them. The Americans, he said, had, until that period, been animated with the warmest zeal for the interests and glory of England, and were attached with so devoted an af-

fection to her government, that nothing but the most inevitable necessity could impel them to wish for a separation from it: that from their earliest infancy, although they had struggled with little aid or compassion from the mother country, through extreme difficulties and dangers, they had nevertheless retained their loyalty, and had been ready, both by money and personal services to defend, on any emergency, the interests and honour of that country; nor was it probable that under more easy circumstances they should now fail to reciprocate a kind treatment, or refuse to contribute a generous proportion to her necessities.

But at the same time that he endeavoured to inculcate the assurance, that this political union with Britain was conformable to both the interests and inclinations of the colonists, he represented them as still more attached to their liberty than any other human consideration; there was, he said, no present advantage which they would not willingly sacrifice: no future consequence which they were not prepared wholly to disregard, rather than submit to the injurious measures by which it was proposed by the ministry to govern them. On the other hand, in his letters to America, whilst he recommended firmness and unanimity in their opposition, he endeavoured to inculcate amongst his countrymen, a more pacific and moderate spirit, and expressed his sorrow at the wild disorders, to which, in some instances, the warmth of their resentments had led them. Of the offensive measures of the parliament, he endeavoured to throw the odium upon the evil counsellors, under whose influence the administration had accidentally fallen, and to entertain the expectation of a government more lenient and equitable, at the expiration of their temporary authority. By these means, he strove to suppress, in their origin, national animosities, the progress of which he perceived with great regret, and the natural tendency of which

he well knew was to extinguish all future prospects of a cordial reconciliation.

When the repeal of the stamp act was accomplished, he continued still his endeavours to extinguish the angry passions which had been kindled by the operation of that law, and to obtain from the parliament a still further abatement of their injurious and offensive regulations. Various circumstances, however, concurred in rendering this, as well as all succeeding efforts of the same nature, unsuccessful.

The resolutions of the town of Boston, published early the next year against the importation of foreign merchandise, affecting the interests of trade in England, and being devised in opposition to the commercial system of the parliament, excited an immoderate clamour, and revived the badly extinguished animosities, in both countries; for the enemies of the late repeal not only resumed, under the favour of this and other circumstances, their authority in the nation, but soon extended their pretensions beyond their former bounds; and representing the Americans as ungovernable and rebellious, growing more insolent and refractory by indulgences, were now resolved to exercise no further measures of lenity and condescension towards them.

Although the encouragement of useful manufactures was a favourite policy of Franklin, with regard to America, having a tendency to preserve his country from the corrupting effects of foreign luxuries, and to lessen her dependence, he nevertheless observed the resolutions of the Bostonians, in this critical juncture, with concern; and at the same time that he approved their spirit, he considered the measure untimely, and tending only to defeat those designs which a more gradual and gentle progress might have brought to a happy issue. Endeavouring, however, to draw the best consequences from a policy he did not approve, he became,

in England, its strenuous vindicator, and by exhibiting the grievances upon which it was founded, strove to counteract the hostility which his adversaries were labouring to excite against it.

But the ministry, from the general strain of his writings and conversations upon this subject, perceived that he was becoming, as they expressed it, "rather too much of an American;" and knowing how considerable an influence he must necessarily exercise over the politics of the colonies, they had recourse to flatteries and corruption in order to bias his inclinations, and to enlist, if possible, his services in favour of the ministerial party. Several individuals of high rank in the government began to express an extreme solicitude for his welfare; and spoke with the warmest protestations of friendship, of the offices which they had designed to confer upon him should he be pleased to remain in England. It was rumoured that he was to be made secretary of state for the colonies. The duke of Grafton observed "that it should not be his fault if Franklin was not provided for:" and lord North, too, "hoped that he should find some means to make it worth his while to stay." A few oblique threats were at the same time added by others, to give greater force to these persuasive insinuations; and a resolve was even moved by lord Sandwich, to deprive him of the office he then held, of deputy postmaster general.

These arts were met by Franklin with the language and conduct of a skilful politician. Whilst, on the one hand, he avoided any expression which might compromise his honour and reputation with regard to his native country, he did not, on the other hand, discourage any hopes which these gentlemen might be pleased to entertain of his facility or compliance with their wishes.

His situation was one which required much political address; for, to preserve the opportunity of serving his constituents with effect, by maintaining a familiar intercourse with the members of government, while in England, it was necessary that he should appear, at least, the common friend of both countries; a policy which required a more gentle strain of complaisance and moderation, than corresponded at that time with the violent passions of his countrymen; and which exposed him sometimes to suspicions of coldness or infidelity to their interests. He continued, however, under this pacific character, conscious that the final determination of the public would be in his favour, to vindicate the liberty and honour of his country.

His answers, in 1769, to Mr. Strahan, to a series of questions which were proposed, it is said, by the instigation of the ministry, are among the circumstances of this period which deserve to be mentioned to his credit. All the grievances of which the colonies complained, with the regulations which they deemed essential to the security of their liberties, are detailed in these answers, with great pregnancy of reason and sentiment, and the consequences of the ministerial proceedings foretold, at their conclusion, with a precision of foresight which is not a little remarkable. "Having answered your questions," said he, "as to what *may* be the effects of this or that measure, I will now tell you what I fear is more likely to come to pass *in reality*. I think it likely that no thorough redress of grievances will be afforded to America this session. This may inflame matters still more in that country; further rash measures there, may create resentment here, that may produce not merely ill-advised dissolutions of their assemblies, as last year, but attempts to dissolve their constitutions; more troops will be afterwards sent over, which will create more uneasiness; to justify the measures

of government, your writers will revile the Americans in your newspapers, as they have already begun to do, treating them as miscreants, rogues, dastards, rebels, &c. to alienate the minds of the people here from them, and which will tend further to diminish their affections to this country. Mutual provocations will thus go on to complete the separation, &c."

Although, to serve more effectually the interests of his country, he still kept up these discussions, and maintained some appearance of impartiality, it is sufficiently manifest, from the condition of affairs at this period, that he could have entertained but a faint hope of any amicable accommodation. By the introduction of British troops into Boston, and the tumults and massacres occasioned by that measure; by all the proceedings, indeed, of the government since the repeal of the stamp act, he knew well that passions were inflamed, too fierce and revengeful, to be appeased by the application of gentle remedies. He observed, also, not only in the minds of those who were entrusted with the supreme management of affairs in England, but throughout the whole nation, that there prevailed a spirit of arrogance and contempt for the Americans, or in the cant phraseology of the times, "the rebels of the colonies," which must have confirmed, beyond doubt, his opinions on that subject; and though he still recommended, in all his letters to the colonies, a moderation and decorum in their measures of opposition; knowing that the ministry would gladly embrace any decent pretext that might justify a more open violation of their liberties; there is nevertheless a strain of vehemence in all his writings, of this epoch, which indicate that he was himself not less exasperated than the most ardent and violent of his countrymen.

When the formation of a general congress was proposed, he was among the most active in advising that measure; be-

lieving that the appearance of such a national confederacy, would give to their cause a greater confidence amongst foreign nations, and if obliged at last to take up arms in defence of their liberties, would enable them to carry on their operations with a greater concert and probability of success.

The discovery and publication of Oliver Hutchinson's letters, which occurred about this period, (1772,) though highly honourable to the memory of Franklin, were attended by a variety of circumstances, which exposed him to the censure and malignity of his enemies. These letters of the governor of Massachusetts and his deputy, being studiously circulated in England, were at length, by some person, wishing to employ his good offices towards both countries, conveyed to Franklin; and as they contained many injurious representations of the colonies, not only justifying the acts of violence which had already been exercised by the ministry, but advising a continuation of the same measures; considering it an obligation of his office, as agent of the colony, he transmitted them immediately to his constituents; hoping thus to transfer from the principal parties, their resentment against these intermediate instruments whose intrigues had fomented and aggravated the existing dissensions.

On the reception of these letters, in America, very dangerous passions, as he had anticipated from the irritable disposition of the people, were kindled against the governor and his associates, and a petition was immediately transmitted by the assembly of Massachusetts, praying from the crown a speedy removal and punishment of such dangerous and unworthy counsellors.

The manner by which the letters were discovered, for obvious and justifiable motives, Franklin had originally concealed; but learning that the suspicion had fallen upon an innocent individual, who on that account had been implicated

in a duel, he immediately published, as far as permitted, his share of the transaction; causing a paragraph for that purpose to be inserted in the public journals. He was not indeed ignorant that, by leaving the name of the person who had originally conveyed him the papers, according to his plighted faith, in obscurity, he exposed himself to the malicious imputations of his enemies. He performed the task, however, without hesitation; suffering no considerations of this nature to prevail over what he conceived to be for his own honour and the interests of his country.

At the meeting of parliament, the petition which he had received from the assembly, he presented to the ministry; expressing his desire that an occasion so favourable should not be unimproved, of appeasing those dissatisfactions, which had been so mischievously fomented between England and her colonies. But the ministers, more intent upon personal interest than upon measures of policy, which might promote the honour and advantage of their country, had resolved to make use of this convenient opportunity, of exciting a clamour against the Americans, and of bringing into disreputation their importunate agent; knowing that any story to his disadvantage would easily find credit amongst the zealots of their party. The petition was, therefore, set aside for several months, and in the mean time many insidious slanders were, by their malicious industry, put in circulation against him. And although these very men were at this time in possession of the most important correspondence of Franklin, transmitted by their secret agents from America, the promulgation of these letters of Hutchinson they represented as a most treacherous and disgraceful transaction; and the press was employed to emblazon the story and proclaim its infamy to the whole world. Trusting, however, that the general tenor of his actions would, in the end, prove a sufficient apology for

his conduct, he made no direct refutation of their slander; but continued, without any reference to personal abuse, to exert his ability in defending the interests of his country, and in obstructing, in his usual manner, the measures of the administration. Of the political essays which he published at this time, several pieces, from the excellent wit and sarcasm with which they abound, are yet read with interest and have been preserved in the various compilations of his writings.

The merits of the petition came, at length, to be discussed on the 20th of January, 1774, before the privy council, and Franklin, as agent of the colony, was ordered to appear before that assembly. Here, his enemies, to gratify their ungenerous animosity, designed to consummate the many acts by which they had attempted to blast his reputation, by a personal and public insult. They were attended by a large concourse of spectators, who had been invited to partake of the edifying spectacle; and a Mr. Wedderburne, a gentleman who appears to have been, both by natural endowments and acquired abilities, well qualified for such an office, was appointed to act as counsel for the governor and his accomplices. He had become, by long experience in forensic litigation, extremely expert in the dialect of scurrility, and had surmounted, by the habits of his profession, all that sense of shame which restrains men of honour within the limits of propriety and decency. At a subsequent period, he was created a peer of the realm, under the title of lord Loughborough, and was dignified, no doubt, in remuneration of such eminent services, with the commission of lord high chancellor: in which office, according to the records of the English histories, he perpetrated many acts of barbarous cruelty, unknown since the days of Jeffries to English jurisprudence; which have transmitted his name with detestation to posterity.

The orator lost no time in arguments for his nominal clients, but turning at once upon Franklin, who sat in unsuspecting security, poured upon him the full torrent of his vulgar and abusive rhetoric. A coward, a murderer, a thief, are a few of the terms which he employed upon him. And these gentle appellations, he so seasoned with sallies of wit and sarcasm, as excited universal amusement, and kept every visage of this grave assembly in a state of perpetual irrision. The president on one occasion laughed aloud; and the contagious joy spreading through the multitude, the whole scene was concluded, it is said, with great acclamation and obstreperous merriment. It is recorded, indeed, to the great honour of lord North, that he alone expressed no approbation of these proceedings; which may be remarked as not the least powerful evidence of their extreme indecency and impropriety.

Franklin, during the whole of this outrage looked on with an unaltered countenance; suffering neither the obloquy of Wedderburne, nor the sneers of the illustrious audience, by any apparent symptoms, to molest his tranquillity; so that not only his enemies were disappointed in their anticipated victory, but, by throwing a new lustre upon his virtues, contributed essentially to extend his reputation. There are few incidents that, in the lives of great men, convey a more exalted opinion of their superiority, or inspire a more lasting veneration for their characters, than that of supporting the insults of power with dignity and composure. To the friends who came to salute him, at the conclusion of this adventure, he expressed only his surprise, that in the supreme council of a nation, once so reputed for wisdom and generosity, there should be entertained so vulgar a sense of propriety and decorum.

The whole of this transaction, when we reflect upon the various circumstances which attended it, and especially upon the venerable age of the man who was the object of such opprobrious treatment, and upon the numerous benefits which his virtues and genius had conferred upon mankind, cannot be sufficiently detested. It may furnish, however, in the representation of human life, a necessary instruction, in discovering how capricious are the distinctions of fortune, and how little superior, even to the meanest passions of the multitude, are sometimes those who receive their homage and admiration.

The animosity of his enemies was, however, not yet appeased. To gratify still further their illiberal malice, they removed him from the office, which he had a long time filled with honour and abilities, of deputy postmaster general; they interrupted the payment of his salary, which he had heretofore received in England, as agent of the colonies; and finally, they instituted against him a suit in chancery concerning the above mentioned letters of Hutchinson; which latter expedient they contrived, it is said, to prevent any discussion he might be disposed to attempt in relation to that subject. This was, however, a nugatory precaution; for of these personal injuries he had resolved to make no account; sensible that the universal reproach which they had incurred by their indecent management of the whole business, would afford him, in the minds of all reasonable men, a sufficient vindication. But the events of this period, though he thought proper to dissemble his resentment against their authors and contrivers, it is evident from the tenor of his future conduct, made a deep and lasting impression upon his feelings. During the remainder of his residence in England, he absented himself from the ministerial levees; and wrote on his passage to America, a minute and circumstantial detail of these

transactions, which has been introduced by his grandson in continuation of his Memoirs.

The friends of Franklin, ashamed of the ill usage he had received, and sensible how inappropriate it was to his age, merits and character, now treated him with increased attention and civility. Even his enemies, perceiving that their ungenerous persecutions had turned the public favour on his side; in alleviation of the dishonour they had incurred, made advances of politeness towards him: and very few, however rancorous the antipathy they bore him, were willing to acknowledge any concurrence in a transaction, which had proved so dishonourable to the authors of it. The accounts from America, about this time, proved also extremely unfavourable to their popularity. The violent measures which they had employed against New England, having terminated unsuccessfully, now involved them in many serious difficulties, rendering them solicitous for the ascendancy of their party and the preservation of their places; and conscious of the great influence which Franklin maintained over the measures and counsels of the colonies, they set themselves with emulation to court his favour; using many stratagems to draw him into some plan of accommodation between the two countries consistent with their interests and policy. To avoid the indecency and humiliation of a personal intercourse with the man whom they had pursued with so much malice, a communication was sought for this purpose through the medium of common friends; to which, although he well knew that little repentance accompanied so sudden a recantation, and that little hope ought to be indulged of any amicable composition of their differences, at the present state of the dispute, as it afforded him an opportunity of discovering their pretensions, and of urging the rights of his countrymen, he willingly acceded. Many con-

ferences were held, and many weeks of continual and laborious application, spent in discussing the interests of each party, and in drawing up such a plan of conciliation, to be presented to the ministry, as it was supposed would prove acceptable to their wishes, and if not accomplish an immediate reconciliation, tend to soften at least the animosities of both countries, which the rancour of controversy had now so greatly inflamed.

The persons employed on this occasion were very judiciously selected; Mr. Berkley, Dr. Fothergill, governor Pownal, lord Hyde and lord Howe; men of moderate politics, and with all parties, of the highest estimation and authority. The house of Mrs. Howe, sister to the latter nobleman, and a lady, according to the account of Franklin, of uncommon merit and accomplishments, was the place of their meetings; she courted the visits of Franklin by an invitation to chess, a game for which she heard of his partiality; during which, she commended his skill and entertained him with very intimate discourses upon science, politics and philosophy. Her brother then, and his colleagues, conducted their plans with much ingenuity. The doctor declaimed pathetically of civil wars, and of the efforts and sacrifices that ought to be made to obviate their calamities. Lord Howe, especially, expressed, for the abilities of Franklin, the greatest deference, and desired that he would accompany him as his secretary, or as a friend and counsellor, to America, where he was about to proceed under commission of the administration; assuring him that he might expect the most generous and ample employments, should an accommodation be effected by their mutual exertions, suitable to the dignity of the British government. He offered, likewise, to procure him the immediate payment of his salary, which had been suspended, and begged that the ministry might be allowed the

present opportunity of testifying their favourable dispositions towards him. The same magnificent promises were reiterated, in an interview with lord Hyde, who assured him that, by co-operating with the ministers, he would not only be honoured in England, but "rewarded perhaps beyond his expectation." These arts were extremely plausible, and the more dangerous, as they were disguised under the mask of benevolence and friendship. But Franklin had now grown old and wise in the knowledge of mankind, and was no longer plastic under the hands of knavery.

To the overtures of these noblemen, he made, however, such replies as corresponded to the occasion; as were required by his own dignity and the relations he bore towards them. One of the ruling maxims of his life, was to live, as far as possible, in good terms with the world, and by honourable condescensions and mildness, rather to diminish the number of his enemies, than aggravate their animosity, by any display of passion or reciprocation of injuries. To Mr. Berkley, however, with whom he had lived on terms of intimacy, and could use an unceremonious discourse, who likewise importuned him with the same topics of pensions, places and emoluments, he replied, that the ministry, in his opinion, would give him a place in a cart to Tyburn, rather than any other at their disposal.

The arguments and sentiments used during this conference, have been detailed by Franklin in his Memoirs; and as regards either capacity or patriotism, are highly honourable to his memory. He drew up, at the request of the ministerial agents, a project in writing, in which he comprehended all the essential injuries of which the Americans complained, and the principles upon which alone an accommodation could be effected; introducing such reflections and illustrations as were required by the interests of the discussion.

He still insisted that in the colonies there existed the most devoted reverence for the British government; that the community of language, sympathy of religion, and identity of laws and customs, were the strongest ties of national fidelity; of which it required but a generous cultivation in the present case, to render the union between the two countries permanent and agreeable: That the colonists were, however, accustomed to regard, in their fullest plenitude, all the privileges of Englishmen as their birth-right; that having encountered the perils of the ocean; the privations and dangers of the wilderness, and the ferocity of savages, in quest of that freedom of which they had been bereaved in their native country, they very reasonably considered their privileges increased rather than diminished by their act of emigration. He placed before them the circumstances of their own revolution, by which they had acquired, with so much glory, their inestimable privileges, and inferred from a parity of reason and justice, the iniquity on the part of England of attempting, and the disgrace on the part of the Americans of suffering, any diminution of their rights and liberties. Reparation of injury, he said, was amongst the first merits of a nation; and even condescensions shown by the stronger party, as they could imply no pusillanimous considerations, were deemed in the highest degree generous and honourable.

His opponents, on the other hand, spent much time and much ingenuity, in doubts, scruples and alterations, in abating from his pretensions, and in reconciling the opposite and incompatible interests of the parties, in expressing hopes that they would at last be enabled to produce some plan from their various modifications which would be sufferable by the fastidious and prurient appetites of the ministry. The principal topics on which they enlarged, were the exposed condition of the colonies and the power of England; the multitude of

her ships, and omnipotence of her armies: "They will ravage your whole country," said Mr. Berkley, "and lay your sea-port towns in ashes." "The chief part of my little property," replied Franklin, "consists of houses in those towns. Of these, indeed, you may make bonfires and reduce them to ashes; but the fear of losing them will never alter my resolution to resist, to the last, the claims of parliament."

These negotiations, which had been prolonged by both parties, perhaps with no further design than that of discovering the extent of each other's pretensions, were at length ended, by the arrival from America, of the transactions of the first congress; which caused much excitement in England, and now furnished new subjects of debate and speculation.

On the first of January, 1775, lord Chatham introduced into the house of lords, his celebrated plan of conciliation, on the subject of which he had sought with Franklin frequent and public interviews. He professed great esteem for his character, and, in the affairs of America, the highest deference for his advice and opinions. "I pay you these visits," said he, "that I may rectify my judgment by yours, as men do their watches by a regulator." On the present occasion he led him by the arm, into the house of lords, which was frequented by a very numerous crowd of spectators. This distinguished familiarity of a man, who held the very highest rank amongst the English nobility, and who was not less a favourite of nature than of fortune, drew upon him a particular and favourable attention; which joined to the countenance and approbation he had received from many other distinguished members of the parliament, not a little inflamed the animosities which the ministerial faction had already entertained towards him; perceiving that he had not only resisted their seductions, but had risen into

reputation under the very efforts which they had used to depress him.

Lord Chatham, having explained and supported his motion, was followed in reply by lord Sandwich; who, in the course of a very passionate harangue, declared that this motion of Chatham's was disgraceful to his name and should be rejected with contempt; that he did not believe it to be the production of any British peer; and added, turning towards Franklin, who leaned upon the bar, "I fancy I have in my eye the person who drew it up: one of the bitterest and most mischievous enemies that this country has ever known." Under this allusion, so severe and offensive, although it drew upon him the observation of the whole assembly, Franklin remained, as if unconscious of the application, with a composed and unaverted aspect; or to use his own expression in relating this story, "as if his countenance had been made of wood." Chatham replied that were he the first minister of the country, he should not be ashamed to call publicly to his assistance, a person so eminently acquainted with American affairs, as the gentleman alluded to, and so ungenerously reflected on; "one," he added, "whom all Europe holds in the highest estimation, for his knowledge and wisdom; whom she ranks with her Boyles and her Newtons; who is an honour, not to the English nation only, but to human nature."

Franklin now perceived that the contention had reached to a crisis when his presence was no longer necessary in England; and that the government had resolved to prosecute their measures of violence, against the colonies, to the last extremity. He prepared, therefore, for his return to America, that he might aid his countrymen by his counsels, in the prosecution of the war which he saw approaching. Other circumstances also occurred which tended to

hasten his departure: he received intelligence about this time, that his residence in England was no longer secure; that the ministers were preparing his arrest, either that they might detain him in captivity, or inflict an exemplary punishment upon him as the promoter of rebellion: nor had he great reason to suppose that they, who had so grossly outraged the principles of generosity towards him, in gratifying their malevolence, would feel a very scrupulous regard for the sacredness or formalities of justice.

During this long residence in England, he had been treated with all the rancour and malice, and abused with all the resentful and unmanly arrogance which power usually produces in ignoble minds. He had, however, the satisfaction of seeing, on the other hand, that his merits were approved by the most worthy portion of the community. Of the marks of attachment, friendship, generosity and affectionate attention which he received during his stay in that country, he has expressed, in various parts of his correspondence, the warmest gratification. To his son, he wrote thus in 1772: "a general respect paid me by the learned; a number of friends and acquaintances among them with whom I have a pleasing intercourse; a character of so much weight that it has protected me when some in power would have done me injury, and continued me in an office they would have deprived me of; my company is so much desired that I seldom dine at home in the winter, and could spend the whole summer in the company of inviting friends, if I chose it. Learned and ingenious foreigners that come to England almost all make a point of visiting me, for my reputation is still higher abroad than here; several of the foreign ambassadors have assiduously cultivated my acquaintance, treating me as one of their corps."

On his voyage homewards, to relieve his mind from the fatigues of business, he employed himself in philosophical

speculations, and made some of those ingenious experiments which are found among his writings, on the waters of the ocean. He wrote, also, a circumstantial detail of the whole of his public operations during his absence. This detail, which constitutes a very interesting portion of his biography, has been lately published in his Memoirs, by his grandson. It furnishes many conspicuous examples of his devotion to liberty; of his spirit and patriotism, and affords a specimen of those diplomatic abilities, which proved, at a future period, so beneficial to his country; and have ranked him, as well for skill as for honesty, amongst the most distinguished politicians of his time.

This portion of his history should not be concluded without adding to it, the following remarks of Dr. Priestley. "It is probable," says he in his Memoirs, "that no man now living was better acquainted with Dr. Franklin and his sentiments, on all subjects of importance, than myself, for several years of the American war. He took every method in his power to prevent a rupture between the colonies and the mother country. He dreaded the war, and often said, that if the differences should come to an open rupture, it would be a war of ten years. That the issue would be favourable to America, he never doubted. The English, he used to say, may take all our great towns, but that will not give them possession of the country. By many persons, Franklin was considered as so callous, that the prospect of all the horrors of a civil war would not affect him: this was far from being the case. A great part of the last day that he passed in England, we spent alone together. He was looking over a number of American newspapers, directing me what to extract for the English ones; and in reading them, he was frequently not able to proceed for the tears literally running down his cheeks. To strangers he appeared cold and reserv-

ed; but where he was intimate, no man indulged more in pleasantry and good humour. By this, he was the delight of a club to which he alludes in one of his letters to me, called the *whig club*, of which Dr. Price, Dr. Kippis, and others of the same stamp, were members."

He arrived in the beginning of May, 1775, in Philadelphia, and was received with all those marks of esteem and affection, which his eminent services merited. His zealous exertions for the welfare of his country, which had already drawn upon him the warmest applauses, now opened his way to the highest honours of the state. Immediately on his arrival, he was elected by the legislature a delegate to the general congress; to which he added, in the opinions of all men, a new lustre and authority; and although advanced beyond the vigour of life, he shared in its most important toils with incessant activity. "My time," he observes to a friend in London, "was never more fully employed. In the morning at six I am at the committee of safety, which holds till nine; and at the congress till after four in the afternoon. These bodies proceed with the greatest unanimity, and their meetings are numerously attended. It will scarcely be credited in Britain, that men can be as diligent with us from zeal for the public good, as with you for thousands per annum. Such is the difference between uncorrupted new states and corrupted old ones." He was the chief instrument in procuring the issue of the paper money employed in the expenses of the war; he projected a *chevaux de frize* for the protection of Philadelphia, then the residence of congress; and by that body was sent on a mission to Canada to solicit the co-operation of that province with the general confederacy. With these labours, he managed also the duties of the general post-office, at the head of which he had been placed by congress; and finally, in procuring the Declaration of Independence, he contributed

his endeavours with the utmost zeal and application; nor can we ascribe to his authority and exertions a small share in the accomplishment of that auspicious and glorious resolution; for besides the general influence of his reputation and abilities, the intimate intelligence, which a clear inspection of the designs of the British cabinet was supposed to have procured him, caused his opinions and arguments to be relied on, in the discussion of the measure, with much favour and condescension.

Amongst the inhabitants of the colonies, there were many who, though passionately devoted to the cause of liberty, fearing that their strength might prove insufficient to achieve and maintain their independence, were yet irresolute; and some who believed that their grievances, though violent, were not sufficiently aggravated to authorize a general rebellion, and who still entertained a hope that some amicable composition of their differences might yet be effected. Franklin, whose experience had forced him into the conviction that the quarrel must now proceed to extremities, endeavoured early to dissipate these delusive and dangerous opinions. On the other hand, he strove, in the various letters which at this time he wrote to England, to impress the belief, not very common with their best friends in that country, of the unanimity of the colonies, and their resolution of resorting to arms in defence of their violated liberties. By the following extract of a letter to Dr. Priestley, we shall see the general strain of his correspondence: "Britain, I conclude, has lost her colonies for ever. She is now giving us such a miserable specimen of her government, that we shall ever detest and avoid it as a complication of robbery, murder and pestilence. If you flatter yourself with beating us into submission, you know neither the people nor the country. You will have heard before this reaches you, of the defeat of your troops,

by the country people of Lexington ; of the action of Bunker's Hill, &c. Britain, at the expense of three millions, has killed one hundred and fifty Yankees, this campaign. During the same time, sixty thousand children have been born. From these data the mathematical head of our dear good friend Dr. Price will easily calculate the time and expense that may be necessary to kill us all. Tell him, as he has sometimes doubts and despondencies about our firmness, that America is determined and unanimous."

The opinions which a great portion of the people in England had conceived of the mutinous and refractory disposition, and of the incapacity and pusillanimity of the colonists ; and the vain presumptions which they had entertained of their own superiority of strength, rendered not only their statesmen deaf to the voice of reason and argument, but infused into their armies a spirit of insolence and cruelty, which they had not displayed in their most violent wars with foreign nations. No sooner had their troops landed upon the territory of the colonies, than, as if exempted from all the ordinary restraints of humanity, or believing that any mercy shown to its criminal and rebellious inhabitants would derogate from the dignity of their sovereign, they set themselves with emulation to ravage and plunder it; and not satiated with the blood they had shed upon the field of battle, exercised against the miserable prisoners who fell into their hands, the most licentious and barbarous ferocity. These circumstances excited through the whole continent, sentiments of indignation and revenge ; and Franklin, who had by this time been sufficiently weaned of his English partialities, under the influence of these events, appears to have been transported beyond the ordinary moderation of his character. Of the papers which he offered to congress about this time, the expressions were considered by his colleagues, notwithstanding

the violent passions with which they themselves were animated, too acrimonious, and the sentiments too indignant for the occasion. With many of his friends, with whom he had heretofore lived in familiar intercourse, and even with his nearest relations of opposite politics, he suppressed until the conclusion of the war, all further correspondence; and some of his letters are now extant, which manifest, in a high degree, the warmth and exasperation of his feelings.

In May, 1776, he was appointed with John Adams and Edward Rutledge to hear certain propositions of English commissioners who had arrived upon the coast, whose purpose was to propose terms of accommodation, or rather "offer pardon, upon submission," to the American congress. Of these commissioners the principal was lord Howe, who immediately on his arrival addressed a letter, accompanying his official papers, to his "worthy friend and old acquaintance," Dr. Franklin, in the hope of enlisting his influence in promoting the great object of "the king's paternal solicitude." The following are some extracts, which deserve to be selected, from Franklin's reply, as highly honourable to his patriotism and abilities.

"Directing pardons to be offered to the colonies, who are the very parties injured, expresses indeed, that opinion of our ignorance, baseness, and insensibility, which your uninformed and proud nation has long been pleased to entertain of us; but it can have no other effect than that of increasing our resentments. It is impossible we should think of submission to a government, that has, with the most wanton barbarity and cruelty, burnt our defenceless towns in the midst of winter; excited the savages to massacre our peaceful farmers; and our slaves to murder their masters; and is even now bringing foreign mercenaries to deluge our settlements with blood. These atrocious injuries have extinguished

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every spark of affection for that parent country we once held so dear: but were it possible for *us* to forget and forgive them, it is not possible for *you* (I mean the British nation) to forgive the people you have so heavily injured.

"Your nation, though by punishing those American governors who have fomented the discord, rebuilding our burnt towns, and repairing as far as possible the mischiefs done us; she might recover a great share of our regard; and the greatest share of our growing commerce, with all the advantages of that additional strength to be derived from a friendship with us: yet I know too well her abounding pride and deficient wisdom, to believe she will ever take such salutary measures. Her fondness for conquest as a warlike nation; her lust of dominion as an ambitious one; and her thirst for a gainful monopoly as a commercial one (none of them legitimate causes of war); will join to hide from her eyes every view of her true interest.

"Your lordship may possibly remember the tears of joy that wet my cheek, when, at your good sister's in London, you once gave expectations that a reconciliation might soon take place. I had the misfortune to find these expectations disappointed, and to be treated as the cause of the mischief I was labouring to prevent. My consolation under that groundless and malevolent treatment was, that I retained the friendship of many wise and good men in that country; and among the rest some share in the regard of lord Howe.

"The well founded esteem, and permit me to say affection, which I shall always have for your lordship, make it painful to me to see you engaged in conducting a war, the great ground of which, as described in your letter, is "the necessity of preventing American *trade* from passing into foreign channels." To me it seems that neither the obtaining nor retaining any trade, how valuable soever, is an object for

which men may justly spill each other's blood; that the true and sure means of extending and securing commerce, are the goodness and cheapness of commodities; and that the profits of no trade can be ever equal to the expense of compelling it, and holding it by fleets and armies. I consider this war against us, therefore, as both unjust and unwise; and I am persuaded, that cool and dispassionate posterity will condemn to infamy those who advised it; and that even success will not save from some degree of dishonour, those who have voluntarily engaged to conduct it.

"I know your great motive in coming hither, was the hope of being instrumental in a reconciliation; and I believe, when you find that to be impossible, on any terms given you to propose, you will then relinquish so odious a command, and return to a more honourable private station."

In July, 1776, Franklin, in addition to his various occupations, was appointed president of the convention, held by the advice of congress, for the purpose of giving a new form of government to the state of Pennsylvania. The constitution then organized, principally by his advice and authority, which consisted of plural executive and single legislature, has since been altered. Whether the intrinsic excellence of a more complex system of legislation, or a reverence for English institutions, to which the people, both by the example of their sister states, and by the early habits of their education, were predisposed; or whether it was the inadequacy of the form preferred by Franklin, that authorized this alteration, may perhaps admit of some doubt. According to the maxim of a very wise legislator, it is not always the best theoretical form of government that should be recommended in a state; but that which bears the nearest conformity to the habits and dispositions of the people; and all history has proved, that any sudden deviation from established practice

in governments, without multiplying factions and dissensions, is extremely difficult, if not impossible. Franklin, in politics as well as in morals, laboured perhaps for a perfection beyond the reach of human nature; and having very closely inspected the turbulence and the dishonourable competitions, which existed in the complicated fabric of English legislation, perhaps desired a system of more simple structure and easy administration. That which he contrived for the state of Pennsylvania, remained, during his life, a favourite theory: nor has it indeed been brought into great disrepute, nor the spirit of innovation yet been suppressed by any visible superiority, or acknowledged beneficence or harmony, in the edifice which has been reared instead of it.

The affairs of the colonies began, towards the close of the year 1776, by a rapid series of disasters, to wear a melancholy and threatening aspect. The defeats of Long Island, the capture by the British troops, of New York, and Fort Washington; the disaster of general Greene, and retreat of general Washington through New Jersey, pursued by a victorious army; the barbarous and unnatural severity with which the enemy exercised their victories; all these circumstances had spread alarm throughout the colonies, and had reduced their condition to a dangerous extremity. Their scantiness of revenue rendered it also impossible that they should long maintain an army upon the field; and the superiority of discipline on the part of the enemy, rendered a small number of their troops extremely formidable. When the congress, in this emergency, had resolved to apply to some foreign power for assistance, their attention was naturally turned towards Franklin; his age, experience and knowledge of the European courts, had qualified him eminently for such a service; and his love of liberty and secret feelings towards England were such that he was not likely to fail in

vigour or activity in the execution of its duties. He was, therefore, appointed commissioner to the court of France: that government, it was well known, would not be displeased with any circumstance which could give disturbance to the power of an inveterate rival; or neglect any opportunity which should be offered, of healing the wounds which in the last war had been inflicted on the reputation and glory of her arms; the remembrance of which she had borne with indignant impatience. Franklin, though he had designed, after the many fatigues he had undergone in foreign embassies, to spend the evening of his life in his native country, seeing the importance of the emergency, accepted, without hesitation, this appointment; and in the end of October, 1776, in the seventy-first year of his age, set out upon this voyage.

He had already taken some steps to sound the intentions of the European governments, and to enlist the affections of influential individuals, in the interests of America, as early as the year 1775. He had carried on, for this purpose, and under the sanction of congress, a correspondence with Holland; as may be seen by his letters to Mr. Dumas of Amsterdam. And in a literary correspondence with Don Gabrial, prince of Bourbon, he used every effort to conciliate the favour of the Spanish government.

At his departure from America, he placed the whole of his possessions in money, between three and four thousand pounds, in the hands of congress, by which he testified his confidence in the success of their cause, and induced others of more wealth to imitate his example. After a boisterous and dangerous vogage, but without any memorable occurrence, he arrived at Nantz. He reposed a few days from his fatigues, and received in that place much useful information of the posture of American affairs: of the disposition of the French nation, and the character of the men in power; and from the

generous civilities that were every where paid him, he formed a very favourable presage of his future success. He arrived in Paris in the latter part of December, and there also was greeted with all the attentions which could gratify his feelings and confirm the expectations which he had entertained in favour of his country; but after a very short residence in the capital, he retired to the neighbouring village of Passy, and resided there during the whole of his subsequent stay in France.

The high reputation which in earlier life he had acquired, as well as the particular causes of his present visit, procured him, on his arrival in France, an easy access to all those individuals of the government who were most conspicuous for their influence and authority; whose acquaintance he assiduously cultivated, and whose friendship and co-operation became powerful auxiliaries, to the accomplishment of his future projects. The French cabinet was at this time filled with men of very estimable characters, all of whom were unanimous in their personal attachments towards him. By the minister, de Vergennes, he was received, on his arrival, with the most polite affability, and during the whole of his residence at court treated with every mark of esteem and confidence. But that which contributed as much as any other cause to his success, was the reputation he enjoyed amongst men of science and letters; for this class of people possessed, at that time, a predominant influence in the nation; gave a tone to the public sentiment, and in a very essential degree determined the policy of the government.

But notwithstanding a war with England was a national passion with the French; and the most pathetic sympathy, especially by the military part of the kingdom, which was eager to engage in the quarrel, was now expressed towards the American cause; there were many circumstances which

Franklin had to encounter, that obstructed the immediate success of his operations. Kings are ever averse to patronize rebellion, however their present interests may be promoted by it; and subjects are ever in the wrong, in their estimation, when placed in opposition to their sovereign. The affairs of the colonies were also reduced, at this time, to a dangerous extremity, and by many regarded as desperate; the French cabinet was influenced by a politic and cautious ministry; fearing, therefore, that after a declaration, they might either by a forced or voluntary reconciliation of their allies, be left to sustain the conflict alone, and perhaps repent of their precipitation, resolved to maintain, at least, until the issue should appear less problematical, a concealed and ambiguous policy. The nation had, besides, been much exhausted by the efforts of a preceding war, and contemplated a new one with timidity and hesitation. They afforded, indeed, some clandestine assistance, made many professions of benevolence, and secretly promoted the disturbances, but observed all the outward appearances of the strictest neutrality.

Every effort which, on this emergency, depended upon Franklin, was eminently exerted, to rouse and animate the desponding spirits of his friends, and to dissipate their well grounded apprehensions. In all his conversations and writings, even during the gloomiest period of disaster, he expressed his fullest confidence in the final success of the revolution, and by a pamphlet which he published at this time, and very widely dispersed, representing the resources of the Americans in a most favourable aspect, he endeavoured to spread the same sentiments throughout Europe. In all his letters, at this time, to England and to America, he inculcated the same opinions, and manifested the same spirit and magnanimity. To Dr. Priestley, he observed, "to me it seems, as it always has done, that this struggle must end in

our favour." At the same time to Dr. Ingenhautz, "You would be deceived, if I suffered you to remain in the supposition that I come to Europe to make peace—I come to procure aids to enable us to defend our freedom and independence. We shall be able to defend ourselves, our possessions, and our liberties, so long, that England will be ruined by persisting in the wicked attempt to destroy them. I flatter myself that, old as I am, I may live to see my country settled in peace and prosperity." And to Dr. Cooper of Boston—"All Europe is on our side of the question, as far as applause and good wishes can carry them. It is a common observation here, that our cause is *the cause of all mankind*, and that we are fighting for their liberty in defending our own. It is a glorious task assigned by Providence; which has, I trust, given us spirit and virtue equal to it, and will at last crown it with success."

The surrender of general Burgoyne's army to the provincial troops, the news of which reached France in October, 1777, and which occasioned very joyful sensations in that country, was an occurrence, the beneficial consequences of which Franklin did not permit to remain unimproved. This was close followed by other important advantages, and the French rulers, from this period began to listen with a more prone attention to his suit, which he continued to urge with increased industry. In this conjuncture, he addressed to the government an elaborate memoir, which contains many very ingenious and persuasive arguments, and which we may reasonably suppose, had no inconsiderable effect in hastening their determination. The American ambassadors were recognized, and the treaty of alliance was concluded, with the court of Versailles, on the sixth of February, 1778. Franklin, conscious of the great accession of strength and dignity his country had acquired by this alliance, did not conceal the emotions

of his joy and exultation. It was remarked that, in token of his triumph, and in gratification of a resentment too legitimate to be censured, he wore, on this ocsasion, the same dress in which he had received the abuse and mockery of the privy council.

Although the intelligence of this treaty with France, he knew, would be most gratefully received by the majority of congress and the people in America, he was aware that there were not wanting persons in that country, even amongst the warmest partisans of the revolution, who entertained disquieting apprehensions concerning it; and who feared that the introduction of foreign troops amongst them might prove fatal to their civil and religious liberties; he likewise foresaw, that partisans of England, whose interests and pride were so much affected by this alliance, would leave no efforts unemployed to defeat it. He therefore extolled, in all his communications with congress, its benefits, and in a manner honourable to his own sensibility, the generous humanity of those who had been the instruments of its accomplishment. Of the king; of "his able and upright" minister, and of the whole nation, his correspondence is filled with the warmest praises and gratitude; and if, indeed, we consider the enthusiasm and alacrity, even beyond what they had ever manifested in defence of their own provinces, with which the French, and some too of their principal nobility, regardless of every personal interest, traversed the Atlantic on this occasion, to fight in the battles of our independence; the delicacy and fidelity with which they adhered to the obligations of the treaty, we must confirm, in its fullest application, the testimony of Franklin; and if we admit that those noble principles of freedom and national regeneration, which received their birth, and derived their first elements from our own revolution, were attended in their subsequent abuse

with fatal misfortune to France, we cannot but look back upon this alliance with some mingled sentiment of sorrow, that it should have proved less fortunate than it was glorious for the illustrious and generous authors of it.

After the conclusion of the treaty, the great advantages derived from the influence of Franklin in Europe, were not diminished; and the services that were imposed upon him became every day more complicate and laborious. Besides his duties as minister, he served for several years as consul, no person being appointed to fill that office; as judge of admiralty for commissioning privateers, examining their papers and determining the legality of their captures; and moreover as merchant, to make purchases and direct the shipping of stores, to a great value, that were sent to America. He was encumbered also with a great variety of subordinate business, as the answering letters, receiving and accepting bills of exchange requiring the most tedious exertion, and many other matters wholly foreign to his ministerial functions, and which the scantiness of his resources often rendered extremely painful as well as laborious; for, to support the credit of his government and prevent the protest of their drafts, he was often subjected to the most humiliating expedients, in procuring assistance from the exhausted treasury of the French, and from other countries of Europe. All which laborious services, it should be remembered, in order to appreciate justly his merits, were performed, not only under the frequent interruptions of a violent disease, but at the age of fourscore years; a period of life, when other men have usually disappeared from the scene of activity.

During these transactions in France, he received a commission from congress, to negotiate a treaty of commerce and friendship with the court of Spain, and he laboured with his usual ardour and ingenuity to accomplish that object.

Knowing that any open or direct application to the Spanish court would, at this time, be indiscreet, he communicated his instructions to their ambassador at Paris, the count of Aranda; but the Spaniards choosing to await until the course of events should justify their determinations, offered, in their replies, but feeble hopes of success; and Franklin, who, in all his diplomatic transactions, observed an erect and independent conduct, perceiving their temporising policy, at length treated the subject with merited indifference. "They have taken four years," says he in a letter to Mr. Jay, who was then negotiating at Madrid, "to consider whether they would treat with us; give them forty, and let us mind our own business." "It seems to me that we have in most instances hurt our credit and importance, by sending all over Europe begging alliances, and soliciting declarations of independence."

Amongst the ambassadors of other countries, then residing at Paris, he supported, in the same spirit, the dignity of his station and character; and in his intercourse of visits with them, suffered no neglect of any of the punctilios of honour and ceremony, which are observed towards each other by the ministers of independent nations. When the Russian ambassador, whose card being left at his door had occasioned a return of the supposed civility, betrayed much alarm at the accident, Franklin with his usual composure observed, that he perceived no cause of embarrassment; "Prince Bariatinski has but to *erase my name* out of his books of visits received, and I will *burn his card.*"

But for the attention paid him by foreigners, even where political motives, in some degree, repressed it, he had no cause of complaint. The American revolution was almost universally regarded with favour, and considered as an enterprise the most important that, for many ages, had oc-

cupied the attention of the world; so that from his public station, joined with the great weight of his private character, he was viewed with a respect and consideration, that perhaps no individual, amongst the inhabitants of a foreign country, has ever enjoyed. In attestation of this fact the examples are without number. The Swedish ambassador had particular instructions to ascertain whether he had such powers as would authorize his making a treaty with Sweden: the king being "desirous to have such a transaction with one whom he so greatly esteemed." The emperor Joseph II. at this time on a visit to Paris, sought also an interview with him, which was only prevented by some unavoidable business. To these testimonies, we may add further, that of the court of Denmark, in replying by the minister of foreign affairs to his memorial respecting American prizes delivered up to Great Britain; "Were you," says the count de Bernstorf, "a person less known and respected, I should have been quite at a loss on the subject of the letter which I have had the honour of receiving from you. I should have considered it as a measure calculated to place us under a new embarrassment as painful as the first; but there is no risk with such a sage as you are, Sir, generally revered by that universe which you have enlightened, and known for that prevailing love of truth which characterizes the well-informed man and true philosopher. These are the titles which will transmit your name to the latest posterity, and in which I am particularly interested in relation to this unfortunate affair."

When the news of the French alliance reached England, it kindled much alarm in the nation, and the ministry of course employed their utmost activity to counteract its effects. Commissioners were deputed to America with propositions of peace, which they appeared now willing to purchase by every concession short of independence. A secret negotia-

tion was, at the same time, set on foot with Franklin; in which they endeavoured, with much address, insinuation and flattery, to seduce him to a separate accommodation, or to enlist his interest in preserving some portion of their expiring authority; employing as emissaries for this purpose, several influential individuals with whom he had lived in intimacy and friendship while in England. He was, however, too well acquainted with the pravity of intellect and pride which prevailed amongst the British rulers, to be the dupe of their artifices. At the commencement of the dispute, he had been the strenuous advocate of union; at the present progress of it, hopes more ambitious had kindled in his mind, and a more extensive prospect had opened to his view. To the solicitations of Mr. Hutton, secretary of the Moravian Society, who was first employed on this ministerial mission, his answers were sufficiently explicit to repress any expectations that might have been entertained of success. To this benevolent peacemaker, he concludes a part of his correspondence with the following remarks: "I never think of your ministry and their abettors, but with the image strongly painted in my view, of their hands red, and dropping with the blood of my countrymen, friends, and relations: *No peace can be signed with those hands.*" To the other deputies, Hartley, Pulteney and Chapman, members of parliament, his communications are in the same strain. "Get first an honest ministry; drop all your pretensions to govern us; think no more of separating us from our allies, and you will find little difficulty in making peace upon equal terms. In proposing terms, offer Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Floridas, to America. If you would have in her a real friend as well as able ally, and avoid all occasion of future discord, which will otherwise be continually arising on your American frontiers, you should throw in those countries."

Besides these authorized agents, were several individuals, who, in a private capacity, possessed a much more formidable influence upon the mind of Franklin. These, either secretly employed, or prompted by their own zeal, used the most earnest importunities in favour of peace, and the re-union of the colonies to the mother country. Among this number are particularly mentioned Mr. Hartley, a member of parliament, with whom he had long lived on terms of great intimacy and friendship; a gentleman, besides, who was animated with a high sense of honour, a sincere love of peace, and the strictest fidelity to his country: also, the celebrated Sir William Jones, not only the most accomplished of his age in letters, but a professed lover of liberty; and from a compatibility of sentiments with Franklin, perhaps the most powerful instrument that could have been selected for winning upon his affections and controlling his resolutions. After many philosophical conversations, which they enjoyed together at Passy, Sir William conveyed to him his sentiments concerning the re-union of the colonies and restoration of peace, in a very delicate and ingenious allegory; in which under the garb of fictitious personages, he was enabled to lavish upon Franklin and his countrymen, many flatteries extremely insinuating. But notwithstanding the influence of these intercessors, their hopes terminated in disappointment. Mr. Jones returned to England with the assurance that all efforts of the kind were now unseasonable, and as he himself expresses it to lord Althorp, "that the sturdy, translantic yeomanry were neither to be *dragooned* nor *bamboozled* out of their liberty." When during these conversations, Franklin was warned to beware of his personal safety, which he had learned from many sources had been threatened, he observed, with thanks to Mr. Hartley for the caution, that having nearly finished a long life, he set no value upon the remains of it. "Perhaps," said he, "the best

use such an old fellow can be put to, is to make a martyr of him."

The abilities and integrity with which Franklin disappointed these intrigues, which were continued in various forms until the conclusion of the war, is a just subject of commendation. His letters, which have been lately published, to Mr. Hartley, to congress and to his friends in America, at this interesting crisis, form a most important portion of his correspondence. They display an acuteness and force of reasoning, an amplitude of knowledge, sentiments of honour and fidelity to his country, that must confer upon his own character an unfading lustre, and preserve the events they commemorate ever recent.

In 1782, when a change in the British cabinet, and the general hatred to which their politics had been exposed by their ill success in the operations of the war, concurred in heightening the prospects of a peace favourable to the Americans, he still continued his exertions with the same unremitted assiduity; encouraging his countrymen and their allies, rather to increase than to remit their zeal, until the great object which they had pursued through so many toils and dangers should be accomplished. In his letters to congress and to general Washington, he advised the most active preparations for the ensuing campaign; he endeavoured, likewise, to strengthen, as far as possible, that confidence, which misapprehension or jealousy had in some instances weakened, amongst the Americans, in the benevolent dispositions of France. He urged, not only as an obligation of justice and gratitude, but as a necessary policy, at this time, a steadfast adherence to their alliance; considering that in this conjuncture, a formidable exhibition of their strength was the only sure means of obtaining such conditions from the enemy, as would secure their

liberties, and promote the future glory, greatness, and prosperity of their country.

The extreme unwillingness of the British government to acknowledge the independence of the colonies, and renounce their authority over so important a portion of their territories, together with their indignation at the disgrace they incurred by so inglorious a prosecution of the war, counterbalanced, for some time, all the motives which tended to hasten an accommodation. They continued, therefore, even after the military operations had ceased, their arts of intrigue and circumvention; and various expedients were again tried to dissever the bonds of the American and French confederacy. Agents were employed to treat with Franklin; others with the court of France; and propositions were at the same time made by general Carleton to the American congress, in order to induce the several parties to a negotiation without the privity or concurrence of each other; and various calumnies were also put in circulation to weaken their mutual confidence; which, it is believed, were not altogether without effect. The French appeared, at least, about this period, to entertain some diffidence of their allies; nor were there wanting men of influence in America, to aggravate injurious suspicions; even to advise a separate treaty with England, and disapproving the gentle and temperate conduct of Franklin, to throw out many violent reflections against him.

Much praise has been bestowed very justly upon the capacity of Franklin in creating this alliance; nor is less due to the diligence which he employed in preserving the union of elements, so discordant, in the midst of devices so ingenious and efforts so laborious, as were employed to accomplish their dissolution. It was this connexion with the French, as he believed, that had given weight to his country with England and respect throughout Europe; to the co-operation of their

arms he ascribed, in a great measure, her signal success, and he preserved personally towards these benefactors of his country, a sincere and lasting attachment. In all his communications with America, he endeavoured to inculcate the same sentiments, and the motives of honour, of gratitude and interest, which urged a continuation of their mutual friendship. "We cannot be too careful," says he in a letter to Thomas Mifflin, "to preserve the friendship we have acquired abroad, and the union we have established at home, to secure our credit by a punctual discharge of our obligations of every kind, and our reputation by the wisdom of our counsels; since we know not how soon we may have fresh occasion for friends, for credit and reputation." In a letter to Mr. Hurly on the subject of a separate negotiation, he also remarks, "America has too much wisdom, is too sensible of the world's good opinion, to forfeit it by such perfidy. The congress will never instruct her commissioners to obtain a peace upon such ignominious terms; and though there can be but few things in which I should venture to disobey their orders; yet if it were possible for men to give such an order as this, I should certainly refuse to act: I should instantly renounce their commission, and banish myself for ever from so ungenerous a country. I should think the destruction of our whole territory, and the extirpation of our whole people preferable to the infamy of abandoning our allies."

After frequent conferences had been held on the subject of accommodation, the English government in 1782, consented, after much hesitation, to renounce her claims of sovereignty, and to treat with the colonies as free states. The dissensions which arose during the negotiation concerning boundaries, fisheries, restitution of confiscated property, and other objects of this nature, were extremely tedious and intricate. The labour of Franklin was, however, divided by the arrival of his

colleagues, Mr. Adams, Mr. Jay, and Mr. Laurens; and the business was, by their mutual exertion, very auspiciously accomplished; advantages being gained very far beyond what either in France or America had been anticipated; and if we may judge from the strain of the letters of Franklin, far beyond his own expectation. "Had it not been," says he, "for the justice of our cause and the consequent interposition of providence, in which we had faith, we must have been ruined. If I had ever before been an atheist, I should now have been convinced of the being and government of a deity. It is he that abases the proud and elevates the humble: may we never forget his goodness to us, and may our future conduct manifest our gratitude." So little did the French ministry anticipate concessions so ample on the part of England, that during the discussions, they advised the American commissioners to make an abatement of their pretensions. This joined to some hesitation which they had manifested in the commencement of the negotiations, occasioned a suspicion, which the malice of some writers has yet entertained, that they were secretly averse to a peace favourable to their allies: and that some incompatible interests or selfish motives had diminished their friendly affection towards them; but this surmise is not only refuted by the direct testimony of Franklin, whose situation afforded him the best opportunity of penetrating the views of that court, but by all the circumstances which attended the accomplishment of the treaty. It was concluded definitively and with the implicit approbation of the French government, on the third of September, 1783. It diffused great joy in America, and gratitude to all those by whose instrumentality it had been successfully accomplished.

This business, now happily terminated, which he regarded as the consummation of the great labours of his life, Franklin

solicited, on the score of his advanced age, his feeble health, and his long and complicated services, the liberty of returning to his native country. It was not, however, until the year 1785, that by the appointment of Mr. Jefferson to succeed him, he was finally released. In the mean time he negotiated treaties between the United States, the kings of Sweden and of Prussia. An article of the latter highly honourable to his memory, and one which he had attempted without success to introduce into his negotiations with Great Britain, was the prohibiting from the injuries of war, the property and persons of unarmed individuals. The contrary practice, by which, not only the innocent and defenceless are exposed to havoc and distresses, but communities demoralized in being filled with ruffians and pirates; though dignified by the sanction of civilized nations, can scarcely be accounted for on any motive of policy or humanity. The attempt of Franklin to suppress so barbarous a custom, though singular in the history of diplomacy, and perhaps fruitless in its consequences, is not the less laudable, and furnishes an evidence of the general philanthropy which distinguished his character, and of that fervent and affectionate regard which he felt, on all occasions, for the interest and honour of his country. "I do not wish," says he in his correspondence on this subject, "to see rising up in America, a new Barbary, and our long and extended coast occupied by piratical states. I fear lest our privateering success in the two last wars, should already have given our people too strong a relish for this mischievous kind of gaming; and if a stop is not put to the practice, mankind may hereafter be more plagued with American corsairs than they are with the Turkish."

The inhumanity of war is a theme on which, in many of his letters, he dwelt with the most pathetic sensibility; nor was he without hope that the interests, at least, of nations

might prevail so far over the perversity of human nature, as to produce amongst mankind some alleviation of this calamity: "I hope," says he in a letter to Mr. Hartley, "that mankind will at length, as they call themselves reasonable creatures, have reason and sense enough to settle their differences without cutting throats: for in my opinion, there never was a good war, nor a bad peace. What vast additions to the conveniences and comforts of living might we acquire, if the money spent in wars had been employed in works of public utility; what an extension of agriculture, even to the tops of the mountains." "When," says he to Dr. Priestley, "shall we make that discovery in moral philosophy, which will instruct men to compose their quarrels without bloodshed? When will men cease to be wolves to one another, and learn that even successful wars at length become misfortunes to those who unjustly commence them?"

The affectionate intercourse which, during his residence near Paris, he enjoyed amongst the inhabitants of that polite city, afforded him, in his labours and disquietudes, a most agreeable diversion; and consoled him in no inconsiderable degree, for his long absence from his native country. Of the friends which his great reputation had procured him, his private virtues and colloquial accomplishments secured the fidelity and attachment: and of the many distinguished personages, both in letters and politics, with which the French capital at that time abounded, there were few with whom he had not lived in a continual and cordial familiarity. "There appeared to me," said his successor, Mr. Jefferson, "more respect and veneration attached to the character of Dr. Franklin, in France, than to that of any other person in the same country, foreigner or native."

He visited assiduously, the French Academy of Sciences, where he was hailed, at all times, with the most respectful

homage, and where he enlarged the circle of his extensive and honourable acquaintance. It was here that occurred, at a numerous and splendid meeting of this assembly, his well known rencontre with Voltaire. This celebrated writer, like himself, had approached the last scene of a long and eventful life; and, from the extraordinary admiration which his talents had excited amongst his countrymen, was now received after an absence of twenty-seven years from his native city, with the most lavish profusion of honours. The apposition of two men, born in regions of the globe so remote, and who in their different spheres had exercised so powerful an influence upon mankind; of men so respectable by their age, as well as by their transcendent genius and the occupations of their lives, was viewed with sentiments of tenderness and admiration. At their meeting, they embraced each other affectionately, as ancient friends after a long absence, and were hailed by the repeated acclamations of the assembly. "It is Solon," said some one in the crowd: "It is Solon in the arms of Sophocles." It is related that at one of these meetings, Franklin, leading by the hand his grandson, and presenting him to Voltaire, asked his benediction; and that the latter, in placing his hands upon the head of the youth with patriarchal solemnity, pronounced aloud in the English language, "*God and Liberty:*" adding, "this is the only device that becomes the grandson of the great Franklin."

The praises also, which were bestowed in France, upon his countrymen, for the valour with which they had conducted the enterprises of the war, afforded him a frequent source of satisfaction. "How happy," said he in a letter to general Washington, "should I be to see you in Europe; to accompany you, if my age and strength would permit, in visiting some of its ancient and famous kingdoms. You would on this side of the sea enjoy the great reputation you have acquired,

free from those shades that the jealousy and envy of a man's countrymen and contemporaries are ever endeavouring to cast upon living merit. Here you would know and enjoy what posterity will say of Washington; for a thousand leagues have nearly the same effect as a thousand years. The feeble voice of those grovelling passions cannot extend so far in time or distance. At present I enjoy that pleasure for you, as I frequently hear the old generals of this martial country, who study the maps of America, and mark upon them all your operations, speak with sincere approbation and great applause of your conduct, and join in giving you the character of one of the greatest captains of your age."

As a means of relieving the seriousness of his official business, he wrote and printed, while at Passy, some important papers on the subject of philosophy; and besides many pieces of humour, which are extant in the late collection of his works, chiefly designed for the inspection and amusement of his friends; such as the "Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout," and the "Petition of the Cats of Madam Helvetius to their Mistress." These are written with grace and elegance, and afford a very pleasant specimen of that sprightliness and good humour, which had accompanied him in all the diversities of his earlier life; and which, even in the infirmity of old age and disease, had not forsaken him. He caused to be published in French, about this time, an edition of the American Constitutions, which he dispersed throughout Europe; placing two copies in the hands of each of the foreign ambassadors, in the design of countervailing the numerous misrepresentations that were then studiously propagated, concerning the character of the Americans; and of quieting the alarms which some politicians seemed to entertain of the wisdom or stability of their institutions.

The reputation for science which he had acquired, as on the one hand it procured him many civilities, on the other, exposed him to an evil, the common calamity of men of letters; which, although it excites but little compassion in the world, is nevertheless not altogether undeserving of it. This was the unceasing importunities of authors and inventors; a tribe of people in which the French capital appears greatly to have abounded, who, by personal application and perpetual epistolary correspondence, sought his advice concerning their schemes or new inventions. This vexation he bewails more pathetically than all the torments of the stone or gout, with which, at the same time, he was grievously afflicted. Among the incidents of this nature, one of more than common importance, from the great impression which it made at that time on the public, was the supposed discovery of animal magnetism by Mesmer; for the investigation of which, he was appointed with a committee, at the express solicitation of the king, and contributed, by his authority, which has, however, not altogether prevailed against the credulity of the world, to expose its futility and imposture.

Perceiving a daily aggravation of his diseases, and the powers of life rapidly declining; and as nothing now remained to detain him, he made haste to set out upon his voyage to America. This intention he announced to the court on the third of May, 1785, in a letter to M. de Vergennes, tendering his grateful acknowledgments of the many personal attentions he had received, and the deep sense he entertained of "the inestimable benefits conferred upon his country. A sentiment," he adds, "that it will be the blessing of the little remainder of life now left me, to endeavour to impress equally on the minds of all my countrymen." The French minister in reply, no less ardent in expressions of kindness and attachment, testified the king's regard for him, and their mutual

wishes for his health and prosperity; from the other officers of government, and from the nobility and gentry of Paris, he received the same flattering testimonials of esteem, and the same marks of sorrow at his departure. His extreme infirmity of health not allowing him to endure, without injury, the motion of a carriage, the queen's litter and mules were sent to convey him upon his journey to the place of embarkation.

He had now resided in France, without interruption, during nearly ten years; and as a love of glory and a sense of gratitude were not the least powerful ingredients in the constitution of his mind, we may reasonably suppose that he did not without a sincere regret, take leave of a place, which must have excited so many endearing recollections in his memory; in which he had received honours and distinctions that have rarely fallen to the lot of an individual to enjoy in a foreign country. From his first arrival, all persons of the kingdom who had any literary pretensions, had courted his acquaintance with eager and unremitted kindness; and after his recognition as minister, he received at court, attentions more honourable than were paid to the ambassadors of the most splendid and powerful monarchies of Europe. In his social intercourse with the inhabitants of Paris, all strove with emulation, who should do him most honour; by festivals, by entertainments, and by every mark of personal attachment. Nor was this fervour of esteem for his character confined to the capital, or to those only, who by their education, were enabled to estimate the full extent of his merits; but diffusing itself throughout the provinces to persons of every rank and condition, each individual commemorated his virtues, and united in the general strain of eulogy and commendation; even at the present day, although the great interests which then agitated the minds of men have subsided, his

name is pronounced with affection and reverence; and to be the "countryman of Franklin," yet remains throughout all France, a title of most honourable distinction, and one which affords to our citizens who visit that country, a sure tribute of respect and hospitality.

In reviewing this part of his history, which, independent of its political interests, is, indeed, one of the most pleasing and interesting of his life, we ought not to pass unheeded the honourable notice which many of the French writers have left concerning him. The following remarks relating to the outset of his career, by M. Biot, an eminent member of the French Institute, deserve especially to be recorded.

"The personal celebrity of Franklin, as Condorcet has judiciously observed, was the only succedaneum which the Americans had to offer for the titles and trappings common to European ambassadors. The discoveries which had won for him, in 1771, the high distinction of foreign associate of the Academy of Sciences, brought him into endearing relations with the most illustrious members of that body. One of them, the duke de la Rochefoucault, who formed a personal acquaintance with him in London, in 1769, had entered into a correspondence with him, which was rendered close and permanent by a rare coincidence of noble and virtuous sentiments. Franklin thus found himself, from the moment of his arrival, introduced, and at home, among those who held the first rank in society: and that at a period when the *esprit de societé* was every thing in France. He appeared in the guise not of a zealot for innovation, but of a sober friend to liberty, at a season in which the word liberty, not yet linked with the most hateful recollections, thrilled deliciously through every heart. We were not slow in remarking—in admiring his caution; his patient firmness; his moderation; that incomparable alliance in his mind of the utmost solidity of judgment, with

delicacy and vivacity of wit. We were smitten with his noble figure, which his fine gray locks rendered still more venerable, and even with his outlandish air, so sure to take in France. Adapting his outward behaviour to the actual, depressed fortunes of his country, he was, on his arrival, grave and reserved, like a man engrossed with high interests and formidable dangers; he spoke little in the beginning; still less when he saw the court of Versailles hesitate; but the little which he did utter was so happy in the turn, and profound in the sense, that it could not fail to make a universal and deep impression. If there was any thing of artifice about him, it consisted in increasing to the utmost his personal consideration, with a view to its more efficacious subservience to the interests of America."

Of the effects of his exterior appearance amongst the fashionable societies of Paris, he appears indeed to have been fully sensible, and has given himself a description of his person to a female correspondent, with much pleasantry. "Figure me in your mind," says he, "as jolly as formerly, and as strong and hearty, only a few years older; very plainly dressed, wearing my thin gray straight hair, that peeps out under my only *coeffure*, a fine fur cap, which comes down my forehead almost to my spectacles. Think how this must appear among the powdered heads of Paris!" The same circumstances of his singular costume have been mentioned by many of the French writers; and there is scarcely any one of note, in politics or science, from whom some honourable testimony in favour of his character might not be given; but having already transgressed our limits, we must restrain our wishes on this subject.

Having stopped a few days in the south of England, where many of his ancient friends repaired to salute him, he proceeded on his voyage, which was prosperous, and arrived on

the fourteenth of September, in the harbour of Philadelphia. During his passage he made experiments on the sea air; wrote a considerable treatise on "Improvements in Navigation:" one on the cause and cure of smoking chimneys, and a third describing a stove for consuming all its own smoke. An extraordinary proof of the force of early habits and discipline, and of the zeal with which he had dedicated his thoughts to the interests of his fellow creatures. He was now broken down by the pressure of eighty years, and by the rage of an excruciating disease, and yet reserved no portion of his time for indulgence or recreation, but still continued, as in the activity and prime of life and vigour of health, to subserve the purposes of humanity.

The news of his arrival at Philadelphia, diffused every where an universal congratulation. It was announced by the ringing of bells, by bonfires, and discharge of artillery. He was attended at his landing by the members of congress, of the university, and by the principal citizens, who, formed into processions, went out to meet him; and amidst their acclamations, was conducted to his dwelling. From public assemblies of every description, he then received the most affectionate addresses; all testifying their great joy at his return, and their veneration for his character: the voice of general Washington also, who in a public letter greeted his arrival with the same benevolent sentiments, was added to the general strain of eulogy and felicitation. By his particular friends and relations, he was embraced with the most cordial welcome; enjoying amongst them, as he expresses it, "peace and plenty, with all the pleasures of a friendly conversation, and liberty, without which man loses half his value."

This scene of his life, which, in many of his letters, he has described with a peculiar satisfaction, is highly interesting. It is in these domestic relations, that the generous qualities of

men, and those certainly which are most precious in the eye of heaven, are best discovered : it is here too, that they enjoy the most refined pleasures that are allotted to the condition of human nature. "I am now," says he, "in the bosom of my family, and find four new little prattlers, who cling about the knees of their grandpapa, and afford me great pleasure. I am surrounded by my friends, and have an affectionate, good daughter and son-in-law to take care of me. I have got into my *niche*, a very good house which I built twenty-four years ago, and out of which I have been ever since kept by foreign employments."

He was not, however, permitted, notwithstanding his long services, to pass away the evening of his life amidst these scenes of tranquillity and retirement. He was appointed very soon after his arrival, president of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania; an office which he occupied during the constitutional term of three years, and discharged its duties with a prudent and equitable administration. He was afterwards elected delegate to the federal convention of 1787, for organizing the constitution of the United States ; and in the intricate discussions which arose on that subject, he bore a very distinguished part, and his remarks and speeches, on this occasion, are of no inconsiderable interest ; both as an evidence of his political sentiments, and as a lesson of instruction on government ; upon which his personal experience, his extensive reading and long observation of the policy of European states, had furnished him ample materials for reflection.

In the debates which arose concerning the organization of the legislature, he sustained, indeed, in common with many others of the convention, some peculiar and unsuccessful opinions. In his private economy, all useless ornaments and expenses he had magnanimously rejected ; and in the administration of a republic, was the avowed enemy of all

luxury or ostentation. The doctrines, therefore, he especially insisted on, and which he illustrated with great force of argument and eloquence, were the right of equal suffrage, and depression of public salaries; and above all, the discouragement of ambition and avarice, which he considered as the great constitutional evils of all free states.

In the admiration, however, which he professed for pure republican institutions, he has given of them no illusory representations. No one has discussed with more freedom, the common topics that have been urged against that species of government; which he very properly introduced as admonitions of caution, in laying the foundation of our liberty, and as incentives to that vigilance which is necessary in preserving it from profanation and ruin. It is from a consciousness of their infirmity that men learn to watch over their health; and though they cannot prevent, they may at least retard the progress of its dissolution. "I am apprehensive," says he, "perhaps too apprehensive, that the government of these states may, in future times, end in a monarchy. But this catastrophe, I think, may be delayed, if in our proposed system we do not sow the seeds of contention, of faction and tumult, by making our posts of honour places of profit." From the frequency with which he recurs to this subject, both in his private letters and public debates, we may perceive that he considered pecuniary influence, as an expedient of government, extremely dangerous; and that it could not be too vehemently reprobated by those who would promote the virtues and liberty of their country.

In the constitution as it was finally adopted, he not only concurred himself, but recommended to the other members a unanimous acquiescence. He became afterwards its most strenuous advocate, as may be seen from his correspondence with his friends in Europe, and from the various writings he

has left in approbation of it. His "Comparison of the Ancient Jews and the Conduct of the Anti-Federalists," a paper written with great ingenuity and felicity of allusion, he concludes in the following manner, which may sufficiently indicate how beneficial he supposed that system of government would prove to the glory and interests of his country. "I am not to be understood to infer, that our general convention was divinely inspired, when it formed the new federal constitution; yet I can hardly conceive a transaction of such momentous importance to the welfare of millions now existing, and to exist in the posterity of a great nation, should be suffered to pass without being in some degree influenced, guided, and governed by that omnipotent, omnipresent, and beneficent ruler, in whom all inferior spirits live, and move, and have their being."

At the conclusion of his presidency, his great age, and especially his diseases, which had now reached a dangerous aggravation, admonished him to withdraw from the scene of public business, and to resign the short remnant of his days to retirement. He did not, however, disengage himself altogether from political concerns; nor did he look back when standing upon the confines of another world, without a generous concern upon that community for which he had employed the energies and cares of his life. Several of his writings, tending to promote useful institutions and the general interests of humanity, bear date at this period; and when entirely disabled from going abroad, by his infirmities, the various societies, of which he was president,—the *Philosophical Society*; that for *Political Inquiries*; for *Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons*, and for *Promoting the Abolition of Slavery*, held their meetings at his house to enjoy the benefit of his counsel and co-operation in their proceedings.

The observers of human life have remarked that men of letters preserve their powers of intellect, whilst others terminate their career of old age by a state of miserable dotage. Thus Turenne, Condé, Marlborough, and Eugene, dated the loss of their mental faculties before those of the body, whilst Homer, Varro, and Fontenelle, reached extreme old age without experiencing any intellectual infirmity. To these we may readily add the example of Franklin, in corroboration of the doctrine. When the violence of his diseases had confined him, in 1790, altogether to his bed, he still employed the intervals, which the remission of his acute pains allowed him, in conversation, or epistolary correspondence; and from his letters and other writings of this period, it is sufficiently apparent that in destroying his corporeal faculties, time had made no hostile impression upon his mind; either in impairing the vigour of his judgment, or humbling the flights of his imagination. His "African Speech," which he wrote and published towards the end of March of this year, whether we consider its excellent composition, inimitable humour, or force of reasoning, is scarcely surpassed by the most perfect of his early writings; nor had the spirit and animation of youth, perhaps, added any thing to the warmth of sentiment, or exuberance of fancy, which prevails in his latter correspondence. Of this, the following passages written but a few days before his decease, to a friend in England, may be a sufficient evidence. "Your letter reminds me of the many happy days we have passed together, and the dear friends with whom we passed them; some of whom, alas! have left us; and we must regret their loss, although our Hawkesworth has become an adventurer in more happy regions; and our Stanley (the musician) is gone where only his own harmony can be exceeded. I hardly know which to admire most; the wonderful discoveries made by Herschel.

or the indefatigable ingenuity by which he has been enabled to make them. Let us hope, my friend, that when free from these bodily embarrassments, we may roam together through some of the systems he has explored, conducted by some of our old companions, already acquainted with them. Hawkesworth will enliven our progress with his cheerful sensible converse, and Stanley accompany the music of the spheres."

For the manner in which he bore his sufferings, and the aspect in which he viewed his approaching dissolution, we also refer to this interesting correspondence. "You kindly inquire after my health," says he in a letter to his favourite niece; "I have not much reason to boast of it. People that will live a long life, and drink to the bottom of the cup, must expect to meet with some of the dregs. However, when I consider how many terrible diseases the human body is liable to, I think myself well off that I have only three incurable ones, the gout, the stone, and old age. And these, notwithstanding, I enjoy many comfortable intervals, in which I forget all my ills, and amuse myself in reading or writing, and telling many stories, as when you first knew me, a young man about fifty."—"I have now grown so old as to have buried most of the friends of my youth. By living twelve years beyond David's period, I seem to have intruded myself into the company of posterity. Yet had I gone at seventy, it would have cut off twelve of the most active years of my life, employed, too, in matters of the greatest importance; but whether I have been doing good or mischief is for time to discover."

When he had approached to the very close of his life, he reasoned thus coolly with a friend: "Death is as necessary to the constitution as sleep: we shall rise refreshed in the morning. The course of nature must soon put a period to my present mode of existence. This I shall submit to with

the less regret, as having seen, during a long life, a good deal of this world, I feel a growing curiosity to become acquainted with some other; and can cheerfully, with filial confidence, resign my spirit to the conduct of that great and good Parent of mankind, who created it, and who has so graciously protected and preserved me from my birth to the present hour."

On the 17th of April, 1790, in the eighty-fourth year of his age, he expired in the city of Philadelphia; encountering this last solemn conflict, with the same philosophical tranquillity and pious resignation to the will of Heaven, which had distinguished him through all the various events of his life. In his will, he enjoined that all pomp or ostentation should be avoided in the celebration of his obsequies; that no monumental ornaments should be lavished on his tomb: the former of which injunctions his cotemporaries appear, however, to have disregarded, for he was buried with great concourse and ceremony; but the latter has yet been observed by their descendants with inviolable fidelity.

He was interred on the 21st of April, and congress ordered a general mourning for him throughout America, of one month. In France, the expression of public grief was scarcely less enthusiastic. There the event was solemnized, under the direction of the municipality of Paris, by funeral orations; and the National Assembly, his death being announced in a very eloquent and pathetic discourse, decreed that each of the members should wear mourning for three days, "in commemoration of the event;" and that a letter of condolence, for the irreparable loss they had sustained, should be directed to the American Congress,—honours extremely glorious to his memory, and such, it has been remarked, as were never before paid by any public body of one nation to the citizen of another.

He lies buried in the north-west corner of Christ Church-yard; distinguished from the surrounding dead, by the humility of his sepulchre. He is covered by a small marble slab, on a level with the surface of the earth, and bearing the single inscription of his name, with that of his wife, and the year of his death. A monument sufficiently corresponding to the plainness of his manners, the simplicity of his character, and the even tenor of his life—No inscription could have recorded his merits; no monument could express the obligations of his posterity!

He had two children, a son and a daughter, and several grand-children who survived him. The son, who had been governor of New Jersey under the British government, adhered during the revolution to the royal party and spent the remainder of his life in England. The daughter married Mr. Bache of Philadelphia, whose descendants yet reside in that city.

Franklin enjoyed, during the greater part of his life, a healthy constitution, and excelled in exercises of strength and activity. In stature he was above the middle size; manly, athletic and well proportioned. His countenance, as it is represented in his portrait, is distinguished by an air of serenity and satisfaction; the natural consequence of a vigorous temperament, of strength of mind, and conscious integrity. It is also marked, in visible characters, by deep thought and inflexible resolution. Very rarely shall we see a combination of features, of more agreeable harmony; an aspect in which the human passions are more happily blended or more favourably modified, to command authority, to conciliate esteem, or to excite love and veneration.

His colloquial accomplishments are mentioned by those who knew him, in terms of the highest praise. From the great diversity of life which he experienced, from his exten-

sive intercourse with the world, he had stored his memory with a variety of knowledge extremely curious and interesting; and besides the diffusion of thought and sentiment with which he animated his discourse, it was enlivened, in his peculiar manner, by ingenious illustrations, pointed sentences and aphorisms, and mostly seasoned by a vein of good humour and pleasantry, which he appears to have carried even into his most important and serious transactions; and which, in all societies, amongst the sprightly and morose, the old and young, learned and illiterate, recommended him to peculiar favour and attention.

The experiments which he made in science, amidst the continued intrusion of business, on objects too, which seemed to require a long life of labour and reflection; which had occupied men of the brightest genius and capacity, enjoying besides the most transcendent advantages of education, must afford an ample testimony of the vigour of his intellects and grandeur of his conceptions. Nor can we doubt, from what he has achieved, had he possessed from early youth, leisure to prosecute his studies without interruption, and to improve his understanding to the proportion of his natural abilities, that he had attained the ultimate dignity of letters, and have disputed, perhaps, with the old world the palm of philosophy and science.

Of his domestic manners and private life, which are considered as the truest test of the value of the human character, there exist the most unequivocal and honourable testimonies. The correspondence of his family and relations abounds with the tenderest expressions of regard for him. Of his intimate acquaintance, those who loved him in his youth, were the companions and friends of his old age; and those who have survived him, retain an undiminished affection and veneration for his memory.

He bore adversity with courage, patience and dignity; and prosperous fortune with the most commendable moderation. Amidst the splendours of monarchy, where he spent a great portion of his life, and in all his intercourse with the fashionable world, he retained the simplicity of his dress and manners; discovering in no instance any solicitude to conceal the obscurity of his origin. On the contrary, he inquired, whilst in England, into the history of his relations, with a most laudable piety; visiting the remote place of their nativity for that purpose. To his parents, also, while they lived, he showed the most dutiful regard, and after their decease, he erected a tomb upon their ashes, and paid every decent tribute to their memory. These incidents are not the less worthy of commemoration, as they are unusual with those who, from humble life, have emerged into preeminence and dignity.

The necessities of his early life; the perpetual struggles which he maintained to improve his fortune and to procure the means of subsistence, had given him habits of severe and patient economy; and observing the multitude of evils which arise from negligence in domestic management, he endeavoured in his writings, to inculcate amongst the people precepts of order and frugality, and dwelt upon this subject with a frequency of repetition and a fervour, that will scarcely be discovered in the speculations of any other writer; but as, from the ignorance and malignity of the world, discretion, which is the perfection of human reason, is often ascribed to insidiousness or cunning; so economy, which is the very source of generosity, is sometimes imputed to meanness or avarice. The deep concern, however, which on all occasions he manifested for the interests of the poor, who constitute so considerable a portion of mankind, we may use as an evi-

dence, and perhaps the strongest that could be adduced, of the beneficence and generosity of his nature. We might also, in illustration of this part of his character, refer to the charitable appropriations of his last will, and to many individual acts of humanity extremely honourable to his memory; to the many useful political and literary institutions, and benevolent societies, which he founded, and which grew into importance under his munificent protection. Kings and princes had cheerfully contributed to his estate, had he consented to receive their benefactions, and preserve the reputation of a loyal subject, rather than hazard, not only his hard earned fortune, but his life, in the dangers of an almost impracticable revolution.

On the other hand there is not perhaps the same reason to commend the liberality of his countrymen. During the season of his utility he received indeed many endearing testimonies of regard; but it must be held also in remembrance, that the eminent services of this man, who is indeed the great glory of our continent, received during his life no essential remuneration, and that no adequate honours have, since his death, been paid to his memory.

In a full exposition of his character, we should necessarily have detailed the other great qualities by which he was so variously distinguished; his sobriety, temperance, extraordinary perseverance and resolution; his devotion to his country, candour, intrepidity and placability in resentment; his scrupulous veracity, constancy in friendship, and his fidelity to all other civil and moral obligations; but this variety of excellence is so directly inferred from the incidents of his life, and so implied in a knowledge of his writings, that a more particular notice might seem superfluous and impertinent. The more secret and minute peculiarities of his character can be

recorded only by those whom a personal intimacy has enabled to observe them; and his imperfections are so lost in a life of virtuous and glorious occupation, that we must leave the care of detailing them, to those who have more leisure and sagacity for the investigation.

JOHN MORTON.

It is a matter of regret, that, even at this early day, the domestic remembrances, and the knowledge of the minor public services of many of our distinguished political fathers, have been, in a great measure, swept away by the current of time. Their prominent political acts,—the general and effectual efforts of their patriotism,—are, indeed, perpetuated in the records of history; but we seek in vain to watch the bursting of the buds, and enjoy the fragrance of the blossoms, which brought forth such perfect and unrivalled fruit. It is a pleasant relief to retire with the statesman, or the warrior, from the perplexities of the senate, or the wild turmoil of battle, to the calm and quiet pleasures of domestic life. It affords a clearer insight into the character of man, to contemplate him in the unreservedness of retirement, divested of all worldly formality, and acting under the free impulse of natural feeling. The dangers of the state, and the intricacies of public affairs, often require the semblance of an insensibility, as foreign to the heart of the patriot, as it is painful to his feelings. The humane and benevolent chieftain weeps in secret over the inexorable and irrevocable decrees, which the stern duties of warfare have compelled him to pronounce. Thus, while we dwell with admiration on the eloquence and the energy of the patriot, and follow, with irresistible excite-

ment, the footsteps of the warrior through the blood-stained fields of his glory, we love to see them seated in the close-knit circle of family love; to listen to conversation brilliantly enriched by learning and experience; to hear the frank and unfettered emanations of their minds; and when the necessary caution of the statesman, and the sword and buckler of the soldier, have been cast aside, to contemplate the character of the man.

John Morton was one among those primitive labourers in the vineyard of independence, the fruits of whose toil are so gloriously ripening, but of whom few memorials have descended to our times. His ancestors were among the first Swedish emigrants who settled on the Delaware, between the Christiana and Wickeeoe, in the suburbs of Philadelphia. The name of Morten appears among those of the first occupants and proprietors of the townships of Springfield and Ridley. He was born in the year 1724, in the township of Ridley, in the county of Chester (now Delaware), about four miles from Upland (now Chester). His father, John Morton, was united in marriage to Mary Richards. He died in his youth, previous to the birth of the son who was destined to render his name as imperishable as liberty. His widow was again married to an Englishman, named John Sketchley, who regarded the offspring of the former union with a care truly friendly and paternal. Being a skilful surveyor, he instructed his young step-son in that and other branches of the mathematics, and soon discovered, from the rapid proficiency which he acquired, that he was the tutor of no common scholar. The space of three months comprehended all the advantages that John Morton ever acquired from instruction in a public school. His education was superintended and directed, at home, by Mr. Sketchley, and what he acquired from that

source, was improved and expanded, through the agency of talents which ranked among the first in the county. He was employed in surveying, and in farming the paternal estate, until public business engrossed his attention, and summoned him to the more conspicuous walks of life.

About the year 1764, he received the commission of a justice of the peace, and was soon after appointed a representative in the general assembly of Pennsylvania, of which he was an active and influential member, and, for a long time, the speaker.

John Morton was a member of the celebrated stamp act congress, which met in New York, in 1765, in consequence of a circular letter addressed to the legislative assemblies of the several British colonies on the continent, by the house of representatives of the province of Massachusetts. It proposed a meeting of committees from the houses of representatives, or burgesses, of the several colonies, to consult together on existing circumstances, and the difficulties to which they were and must be reduced by the operation of the acts of parliament, for levying duties and taxes on the colonies; and to consider of a general, and united, dutiful, loyal, and humble, representation of their condition to his majesty, and to the parliament, and to implore relief. In consequence of this circular, John Morton, on the eleventh of September, 1765, was appointed by the house of representatives of Pennsylvania, (of which he was then a member,) in conjunction with John Dickinson and George Bryan, to attend the general congress of committees at New York. They were instructed to consult relative to the points contained in the circular from Massachusetts, and strictly required to take care that such addresses in which they united, were drawn up in the most decent and respectful terms: avoiding every expression that could give the least offence to his majesty, or to either house of parliament.

The first measure of this congress was a declaration of the rights and grievances of the colonists, which asserted them to be entitled to all the rights and liberties of natural born subjects of Great Britain, among the most essential of which, were the exclusive right to tax themselves, and the privilege of a trial by jury. A petition to the king, together with a memorial to each house of parliament, drawn up with temper and firmness, were also agreed on.

In the year 1766 or 1767, the sheriffalty of the county becoming vacant by the death of the incumbent, some months previous to the stated time of election, Mr. Morton was appointed by the governor to supply his place; and, at the next general election, having offered himself as a candidate for that office, he was elected by an overwhelming majority. He executed the duties of his station with satisfaction to the public, and credit to himself, during the term of three years. Soon after the battle of Lexington, which opened the drama of war, by rousing the resentment of every American, and by diffusing the spirit of military enthusiasm throughout the land, a battalion of volunteers was formed in the neighbourhood of his residence, who chose, for their colonel, Mr. Morton; but other public engagements prevented him from accepting the commission. About this time, he was appointed one of the judges of the supreme court of Pennsylvania; having before held, with dignity and ability, the office of president-judge of the court of general quarter sessions, and common pleas.

But the point on which his claims to the grateful recollection of posterity principally depends, is involved in the act of granting his support, and affixing his signature, to the Declaration of Independence. On the twenty-second of July, 1774, he was appointed, by the assembly of Pennsylvania, a delegate to the first congress, held in Philadelphia, in Sep-

tember of that year. He was instructed to assist in forming and adopting a plan for the purpose of obtaining redress of American grievances, of ascertaining American rights upon the most solid and constitutional principles, and for establishing that union and harmony between Great Britain and the colonies, which was considered necessary to the welfare and happiness of both.

Mr. Morton was re-elected to congress on the fifteenth of December, 1774, and took his seat in that body on the tenth of May following, at the meeting of the second congress. On the third of November, 1775, he was again appointed a representative, while serving as speaker of the house of assembly; and on the twentieth of July, 1776, he was elected, for the last time, a member of the great national council.

In deliberating on the momentous subject of independence, Mr. Morton found himself called upon to act with firmness and decision, on a most trying and responsible occasion. It is a fashionable thing at the present day, and one which sometimes constitutes a large proportion of the pseudo-patriot's claims to distinction, to rail without mercy or discrimination, against all those who, at any time, either before or after its adoption, have dared to breathe a suggestion against the Declaration of Independence. In this sweeping condemnation, there is no dictinction made between those who opposed the principles of the measure, and those who doubted its expedience at the particular moment of its adoption. Now, a respectable portion of the most earnest and unshaken advocates of the cause, men who never were, and never could be doubted, as pure and irreproachable patriots, were averse to sealing the separation of the two countries, without a further and more serious consideration of a subject, so pregnant with fearful and unknown events. No wonder, then, that Mr. Morton experienced the most intense anxiety of mind, when

he was required to give the casting vote of the Pennsylvania delegation; a vote which would either confirm or destroy the unanimity of the Declaration of Independence; a vote upon which hung the important decision, whether the great state of Pennsylvania should, or should not, be included in the league which bound her sister colonies together. On the fourth of July, 1776, when the question was about to be decided, deep interest was excited with regard to the states of Delaware and Pennsylvania, which had previously voted in opposition to independence. The opportune arrival of Mr. Rodney secured the voice of the former, and the absence of two adverse members of the Pennsylvania delegation reduced it, in number, to five:—these were James Wilson, Benjamin Franklin, Charles Humphreys, Thomas Willing and John Morton. Mr. Wilson and Dr. Franklin were decidedly in favour of, and Mr. Humphreys and Mr. Willing opposed to the measure. Every thing rested on the determination of Mr. Morton; the interests of one of the largest states on the continent, were at stake; its secession from the common cause might have been productive of the most pernicious consequences; and the honour of the country, and of the cause, demanded cordiality and unanimity. He enrolled his vote in favour of independence; but the mental anxiety which he experienced in so novel and solemn a situation, and the great responsibility which he had incurred in case the measure should be attended with disastrous results, preyed upon his peace, and is confidently said to have accelerated, if it did not cause, his dissolution.

He served with ability and judgment, on many important committees, during the term of his service in congress; and he was chairman of the committee of the whole, during the organization of a system of confederation, finally agreed to, on the fifteenth of November, 1777.

John Morton possessed a disposition at once lively, sociable, friendly and humane. Overpowering the deficiencies of early education, by the strength of his mind, and the force of his talents, he rose to the highest and most dignified offices of the state. Casting aside the chain and the quadrant of the surveyor, he measured his mind with the first men of the age, in the wide, but unsurveyed, field of rational freedom, and was one among the first to regulate its angles according to the two principles of practical political geometry. It would have been in vain to seek the plough-boy of Ridley, in the dignified judge upon the bench, in the speaker of the legislative assembly of Pennsylvania, or in the important member of the most august body of assembled virtue and patriotism, that the world has ever been taught to venerate. He was charitable to the poor; a kind friend, an affectionate husband and father; a social, and oftentimes jocular companion. His modesty was equal to his merit; and the remark might justly be applied to him in the language of the poet, that,

> "It is the witness still of excellency,
> To put a strange face on his own perfection."

Eminently beloved by his neighbours, their confidence in him was perfect and unshaken; and a long list of his services, as executor and guardian, shows, that the dying parent could often meet, with more consolation, the stroke of death, under the conviction that the property of his children, and the regulation of their conduct, had been committed to the charge of an honest man.

He entered into matrimony with Miss Ann Justis, of the state of Delaware: they were blessed with a numerous offspring, eight of whom, three sons and five daughters, were living at the time of their father's decease.

In the month of April, 1777, a violent inflammatory fever removed him from this mortal scene, in the fifty-fourth year of his age: he was buried in the cemetery of St. James's church, in Chester, of which he was a member. At the close of his life, he was abandoned by some who had been his warmest friends, but whose political sentiments differed from his own, and they could neither forgive nor forget the vote which he had given in favour of independence. It was then that the patriot shone forth even amid the pangs of dissolution: "Tell them," said he, on his death-bed, and with a prophetic spirit, —"tell them that they will live to see the hour, when they shall acknowledge it to have been the most glorious service that I ever rendered to my country."

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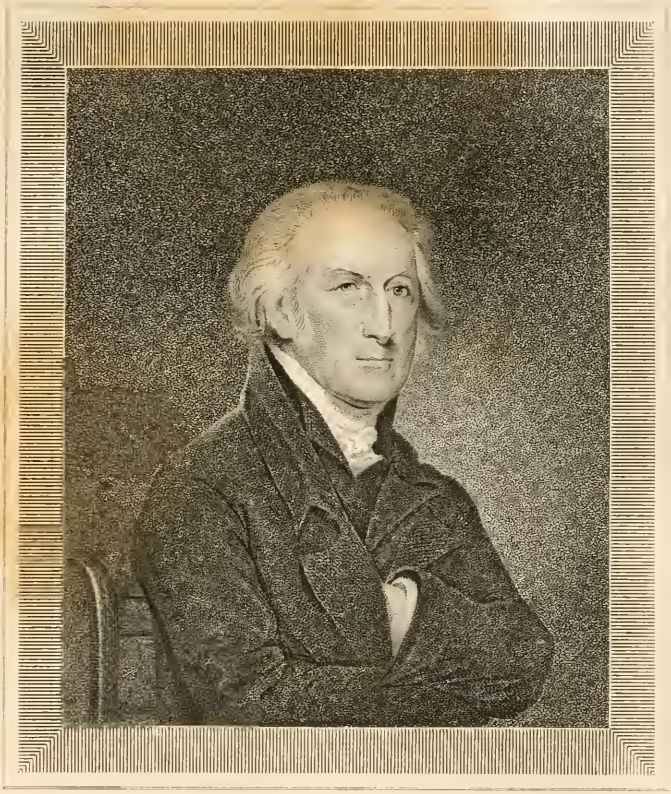

GEORGE CLYMER.

Engraved by J.B. Longacre from an original miniature by [illegible]

GEORGE CLYMER.

The profession of the law is, in this country, the most certain path to political distinction, not only from the influence which fluency of speech confers, but from the intimate connexion existing between law and politics. At the dawn, and during the meridian of the revolution, this distinction was less manifest, although, in the aggregate, the gentlemen of the bar maintained and merited a powerful preponderance. But, among the illustrious men who flourished in those perilous times, the merchant, the physician, the farmer, the mechanic, and the sailor, frequently acted a conspicuous part. The spirit of patriotism, like that of religion, is not circumscribed in its operations; it honours and elevates the object in which it appears, whatever may be his situation in society, and imparts a zeal and dignity to his exertions, which, without that incentive, the most gifted minds would be unable to attain. Hence in the contemplation of the incipient efforts, and political rise, of many of the founders of our political independence, we have seen the merchant abandon his commercial interests; the physician, his practice; the farmer, his plough; the mechanic, his trade; and the sailor, his ship; for the purpose of devoting their time and talents to the common interests of their country. At the present day, when the unalterable influence of time has softened the sentiments which such sacrifices ought to create, it is impossible to form

a proper estimate of the self-devotion of our forefathers, without recurring, mentally and fully, to the times in which they flourished, and to the honourable privations which they endured. It is by translating ourselves as it were, to the memorable epoch of the great revolutionary struggle, and making ourselves hypothetical participators in the dangers and sufferings of those who were engaged in it, that we can alone appreciate the disinterested patriotism and dauntless devotion which guided their exertions. Happy, as we are, in the enjoyment of all those blessings inseparably connected with freedom, and conscious that they emanated from a band of men whose prototypes are unknown in history, we are too prone to be satisfied with the happiness which we enjoy, without reverting to the self-denial and fearless perseverance which produced it. To arouse the feelings and gratitude of the American community, by affording a retrospect of the individual exertions which tended to establish their present political elevation, is a duty, in the performance of which, the performer and public ought to be equally interested.

George Clymer, whose name is affixed to the Declaration of Independence, was descended from a respectable family of Bristol, in England. His father emigrated to this country, and settled in Philadelphia, where he married. Mr. Clymer was born in that city, in the year 1739, and the decease of his parents left him an orphan at the early age of seven years. The want of parental protection was, however, fully and affectionately supplied by the guardianship of his uncle William Coleman, whose character and acquirements had elevated him to a high rank among the citizens of Philadelphia. His precepts and example were, therefore, eminently calculated to establish the principles of Mr. Clymer upon a proper model, and his extensive library afforded him all

the advantages of reading, and consequent reflection. He derived great literary benefit from being under the tuition of such a man, who, independent of general respectability, possessed a highly cultivated mind, and was particularly distinguished for his knowledge in the mathematics.

Mr. Clymer was educated in Philadelphia, under the superintendence of Mr. Coleman, with whom he lived until the time of his marriage, and the principal part of whose fortune he inherited. After the completion of his studies, he entered the counting-room of his uncle for the purpose of acquiring a knowledge of mercantile pursuits. He possessed, however, little taste for this employment, his inclination leading him to the cultivation of his mind. When he had attained the proper age, he connected himself in business with Mr. Robert Ritchie, and, at a subsequent date, with his father-in-law, and brother-in-law, under the firm of Merediths and Clymer. After the decease of the elder Mr. Meredith, the business was conducted by the two surviving partners, until about the year 1782, when it was discontinued.

Although the early loss of his parents, the circumstances of his education, and the profession of his uncle, led him to embark in the pursuits of commerce, he was uniformly and decidedly opposed to it: he disliked it from its peculiar precariousness, and the necessary dependence which the merchant must place in the honour and integrity of others, thereby removing to a certain degree, the conduct of his affairs beyond his immediate control. Hence he successfully discouraged his children from entering into mercantile affairs. He maintained that equal gain and loss might balance in the books, but not in the mind; that gain imparted a sudden elevation to the spirits, which soon descended to their ordinary level, while loss depressed the spirits, which did not so easily rise again; that, therefore, these considerations furnished an

argument against that business, or course of life, which subjected the individual to such a variety of fortune, because there was more to lose than to win in it.

It is too often our lot to contemplate with renewed but ineffectual regret, the deficiency of kowledge relative to the early years of many of our political fathers. The inquisitive mind, while it dwells with animation upon their achievements, seeks in vain to discover the ripening of the germe, or gather instruction at the fountain head of their usefulness. The early developments of those minds, which, in their rich maturity, shed throughout the land the rays of liberty and political light, are best adapted to incite the dawning exertions of the patriot, and guide the course of his mental improvement. Hence their loss is not restricted to the deficiencies which they create in the narrative of the genius and virtues of the individual to whom they relate, but includes that of a model which would have extended its benefits to every branch of our political society. But, while we regret the deficiency, we cannot but observe that it proceeded from the most simple cause. In the youthful days of our distinguished forefathers, the dependence of this country upon Great Britain was firmly established, and the idea of emancipation was not, perhaps, in one solitary instance indulged. Hence the flight of ambition was restricted, and the highest distinctions of the colonies had been enjoyed by a great number of individuals. Honours, in which a multitude participate, are prone to depreciate in the public view, and continue to confer decreasing distinction. Under these circumstances, however noble may have been the efforts, and flattering the prospects, of the aspiring youth, there was a boundary beyond which he could not pass, and a colonial subjection which dictated the path and the limits of his political elevation. It was not to be expected that the youthful days of

individuals, whose early genius and talents predicted, on a proper theatre, the most extended usefulness and honours, could have attracted a great portion of attention beyond the domestic circle, when the course of their future career was limited to distinctions, which a multitude of predecessors had enjoyed. If the storm of the revolution had been then heard, even afar off, the hopes of the people would have rested upon those best calculated, by their mental vigour, to lead them through the mazes of an untried scene; but the idea of independence was then unknown, and the great actors in the times of peril which succeeded, had, in general, matured the genius which their youthful days had elicited, before they were summoned to enrol themselves among men, whose elevation was unrestricted by the yoke of slavery.

To this cause we may, in a great measure, attribute the darkness which hangs over the early days of Mr. Clymer; and the knowledge we possess only leads us more to lament the loss of that which is for ever "buried in the dark backward and abysm of time." He acquired the habit of reading and reflection at an early age, and was distinguished for the clearness and originality of his conceptions, and the soundness of his understanding. He read with close attention, and frequently committed the result of his reflections to paper. Although not intended for any of the learned professions, he extended his course of studies to those branches of knowledge which contributed to the general improvement of his mind; he thus became acquainted with the general principles of law, and in the course of this particular study, more firmly fixed them upon his remembrance by making a compendium of Blackstone's Commentaries. He was well versed in history, but his mind entertained, from the earliest period, a strong bias towards politics and agriculture, as those branches of science which he supposed would more

materially conduce to the happiness and prosperity of his country, to the promotion of which his mind was undeviatingly directed.

In the year 1765, when about twenty-seven years of age, he married Miss Elizabeth Meredith, the eldest daughter of Reese Meredith, one of the principal merchants of Philadelphia. He was an early emigrant from Bristol, in England, and possessed a generous and elevated mind. The following interesting anecdote affords a distinct view of his character and feelings: when general Washington was a very young man, and before he had attained any distinction, he visited Philadelphia, and made his appearance at the coffee house, where he had not a single acquaintance, and was, therefore, entirely unnoticed. Mr. Meredith coming in, and finding a stranger in this awkward situation, went up to him, took him by the hand, inquired his name, introduced himself, took him to his house, and behaved with so much kindness and hospitality, as not only to induce him to continue at Mr. Meredith's house while he remained in the city, but ever after to make it his home when he visited Philadelphia. During a long course of years, the matrimonial connexion of Mr. Clymer subsisted in uninterrupted harmony, and served mutually to mitigate the feelings arising from domestic afflictions and bereavements.

The period was now rapidly approaching when genius was to find its proper level, and patriotism was to be no longer enchained. The principles of Mr. Clymer speedily designated him as one of those who were destined to direct the coming storm; to emerge in triumph from the conflict, or sink fearlessly beneath its fury. His firmness and his talents pointed him out as a man who would not, in case of defeat, owe his safety to his obscurity, but as one who would hazard his dearest interests in the cause, and either live as a freeman,

or perish as a patriot. He was a republican from principle, and his heart glowed with indignation against the oppressions that were practised, and still more against those that were meditated, towards this country. He was, therefore, among the first who embarked in opposition to the arbitrary acts, and unjust pretensions, of Great Britain. He diligently attended all the private and public meetings, which, at that early day, were held by the friends of the cause; and manifested an ardent and persevering zeal in its support. When conciliatory measures were found unavailing, and it became necessary to arm in defence of the colonies, he accepted the appointment of captain in a company of volunteers, and continued to hold that commission until he was compelled, by his civil, and more urgent duties, to resign it. General Cadwalader, to whose brigade he was attached, expressed great regret at his retirement from military pursuits.

In the year 1773, when the importation of tea into America on account of the British East India Company, produced a universal excitement, the citizens of Philadelphia warmly adopted those measures which were best calculated to resist the operations of the measure, by preventing the sale of the tea. At a numerous meeting, held on the sixteenth day of October, a series of spirited resolutions, for the purpose of restraining the sale, were unanimously adopted. They maintained, that the disposal of their own property was the inherent right of freemen, and that the claim of parliament to tax America, was, in other words, a claim of right to levy contributions at pleasure; that the duty imposed on tea landed in America, was levying contributions on the Americans without their consent; that the express purpose for which the tax was levied, namely for the support of government, administration of justice, and defence of his majesty's dominions in America, had a direct tendency to render assemblies use-

less, and to introduce arbitrary government and slavery: that a virtuous and steady opposition to this ministerial plan of governing America, was absolutely necessary to preserve even the shadow of liberty, and was a duty which every freeman in America owed to his country, to himself, and to his posterity; that the resolution entered into by the East India Company to send out their tea to America, subject to the payment of duties on its being landed, was an open attempt to enforce the ministerial plan, and a violent attack upon the liberties of America; that it was the duty of every American to oppose that attempt; that whoever should directly, or indirectly, countenance the attempt, or in anywise aid or abet in unloading, receiving, or vending the tea sent, or to be sent out by the East India Company, whilst it remained subject to the payment of a duty, was an enemy to his country; and, finally, that a committee should be immediately chosen to wait on those gentlemen who, according to report, were appointed by the East India Company, to receive and sell the said tea, and to request them, from a regard to their own characters, and the peace and good order of the city and province, immediately to resign their appointments.

Mr. Clymer strongly advocated these energetic measures, and was appointed chairman of the committee. However unpleasant may have been the duty thus assigned to him, the importance of its proper performance did not permit him to hesitate a moment in demanding a resignation of the offensive appointments. The commissions had been sent to three of the principal mercantile houses in Philadelphia, two of which, with praiseworthy alacrity, coincided in the wishes of the committee. The cautious and temporising conduct of the other commissioners excited strong animadversions, but they were at length induced to submit to the popular opinion.

When the growing dangers of the times rendered it necessary to appoint a council of safety, Mr. Clymer was chosen a member of it, and performed the duties of his station with great activity and decision. His inflexible patriotism and integrity, and the unqualified confidence reposed in him by all those with whom he was associated in the public councils, pointed him out to congress as a fit person to be entrusted with the care of the public monies, and he was accordingly appointed one of the first continental treasurers, in conjunction with Michael Hillegas, on the twenty-ninth of July, 1775. This office he continued to fill with care and fidelity notwithstanding the multiplicity of his other concerns, until shortly after his first appointment to congress, when he sent in his resignation, on the sixth of August, 1776, being resolved to devote his undivided attention to the more important interests of his country.

To the loan opened for the purpose of rendering the opposition to the measures of the British more effective, he was one of the first to subscribe: exchanging, in the most disinterested manner, all his specie resources for continental currency. The warmth of his zeal for the promotion of the loan, was also manifested in his successful exertions in procuring subscriptions among his friends. His devotion to the cause of the colonists, appeared, at this period, to have been marked with the greatest enthusiasm; he made a kind of pilgrimage to Boston, for the purpose, as it is believed, of imbibing fresh draughts of the love of liberty from the fountain-head, and of animating his own patriotism by contemplating the virtuous and spirited opposition of that portion of the country.

Being one among the first to feel and acknowledge the necessity of a total separation from the mother country, he was appointed on the twentieth of July, 1776, in conjunction with

Dr. Benjamin Rush, James Wilson, George Ross and George Taylor, to succeed those members of the Pennsylvania delegation, who had refused their assent to the declaration of independence, and abandoned their seats in congress. From this circumstance it arose, that the new members who were elected as acknowledged advocates of the measure, were not present when that memorable instrument was agreed upon by congress. Mr. Clymer, however, affixed his signature to the manifesto, as if in the performance of an act which was about to consummate his dearest wishes, and realize those fond prospects of national prosperity which had ever been transcendent in his thoughts. While the feeble bonds which still united the colonies to the mother country were permitted to exist, an almost undefinable species of depression and uncertainty continued to haunt the minds of the American community, and even extended its influence to those who were most zealous and active in the cause. But when the solemn declaration of our wrongs, and the firm assertion of our rights, had gone forth, and when the declaration of independence had given us a rank amongst nations, a new spirit was diffused throughout society, the title of rebel was exchanged for a more exalted character, and the self-devotion evinced by the promoters of the measure was met by a correspondent firmness and enthusiasm on the part of the people.

On the twenty-sixth of September, 1776, Mr. Clymer was appointed, together with Mr. Stockton, to visit Ticonderoga, to which place he immediately proceeded, to inspect the affairs of the northern army. The continued approbation of congress sufficiently testifies the faithful performance of that confidential service. Having an entire confidence in the commander in chief of our armies, he uniformly promoted every measure that was the least calculated to extend the powers, and assist the views, of that great man; a course of conduct,

the policy and utility of which was variously manifested during the war.

When congress, on the approach of the British army through New Jersey, considered it necessary to adjourn to Baltimore, in December, 1776, a committee consisting of Robert Morris, George Walton, and Mr. Clymer, was appointed, with powers to execute such continental business in Philadelphia as might be considered proper and necessary. A large sum of money was committed to their charge, for such public uses as they should think proper; with powers to call upon the commissioner of the loan office, for such further sums as the continental service might require. At this period, the family of Mr. Clymer resided in Chester county, twenty-five miles distant from Philadelphia; but so strictly did he devote his time to the objects of his appointment, that when he paid them a visit, he left the city late in the afternoon, and returned in the morning.

On the twelfth of March, 1777, he was re-elected to congress, and continued to be an active and efficient member of that body, until the nineteenth of May following, when the effects of his unremitting exertions compelled him to obtain leave of absence for the recovery of his health. His services on committees, the most arduous of congressional duties, were frequent and persevering, and he acted with fidelity as a member of the boards of war and of the treasury. On the ninth of April, he was appointed, with others, to consider the proper steps to be immediately taken by congress, and recommended to the state of Pennsylvania, for opposing the enemy, if they should attempt to penetrate through New Jersey, or to attack Philadelphia. On the eleventh of July, 1777, he was appointed, together with Mr. P. Livingston and Mr. Gerry, to proceed to the army under the command of general Washington, to institute a diligent inquiry into the

state of that army, particularly as it related to the causes of complaint in the commissary's department; and to make such provision as the exigency or importance of the case required.

At a meeting of the general assembly of Pennsylvania, held on the fourteenth September, 1777, Mr. Clymer was not re-elected to congress, although he served, for a time, after that period. During the fall of this eventful year, when the British army, landing at the Head of Elk, defeating general Washington on the Brandywine, were marching towards Philadelphia, the family of Mr. Clymer, as already mentioned, resided in Chester county. The change of measures adopted by the enemy, however, threw them into the very scene of danger, and at the instigation of certain domestic traitors, their retreat was pointed out, and the house sacked by a band of the British soldiers. All the furniture, and a large stock of liquors were destroyed, and such casks of wine as they were unable to consume or convey away, were poured upon the floors of the cellars. Mr. Clymer, however, firm in his devotion to his country, especially at a period which required the exertions of every individual, would not permit his private affairs to interfere with his public duties. Neither the destruction of his property nor the derangement of his family, nor the calls for his attendance upon them during their flight, aggravated as it was by sickness, could allure him from the public cause and councils. Another proud testimonial of the fervent patriotism of Mr. Clymer, and of the peculiarly hostile estimation in which his indefatigable services were held by the enemy, was evinced when the British took possession of Philadelphia. They were so exasperated against him, that they resolved to tear down his house, and assembled for that purpose, at the abode of his aunt, in Cherry street, which they believed to be his property. Being, however, assured of their mistake, they fortunately desisted.

In the year 1777, an inroad was made on the western frontiers of Virginia and Pennsylvania by some savage tribes of Indians, during which a number of helpless people were barbarously massacred, and the peaceable inhabitants driven from their homes and reduced to great distress. These atrocious acts were committed at the instigation of British agents and emissaries, who also excited a dangerous spirit of disaffection among worthless and evil disposed individuals on the frontiers, and induced them to aid the enemy in their barbarous warfare. The Shawanese and Delaware Indians continued well affected, and disposed to preserve the league of peace and amity entered into with the American congress, and were, on that account, threatened with an attack by their hostile neighbours. It having thus become necessary to adopt measures for the safety of the frontiers, as well as to preserve the public faith plighted to our Indian allies, congress resolved to appoint three commissioners to proceed to Fort Pitt, with instructions to investigate the rise, progress, and extent, of the disaffection in that quarter, and take measures for suppressing it, and for bringing the people to a sense of their duty. The powers of this committee, consisting of colonel Samuel Washington, Gabriel Jones, and Mr. Clymer, were very extensive. They were authorized to suspend any officers in the service of the United States, employed in that quarter, and appoint others in their room, and to confine in safe custody all such officers against whom they could procure satisfactory proof of their being offenders against the rights and liberties of America; to engage and cultivate the friendship of the Shawanese and Delaware Indians, and enlist as many of their warriors as they might deem convenient, in the service of the United States; to concert with brigadier general Hand, a plan for carrying the war into the enemy's country, and cause the same to be speedily executed; to ex-

tend the operations of the war, under certain provisions, against the British garrison at Detroit. It was also earnestly recommended to the legislatures of Virginia and Pennsylvania, to invest the commissioners with every necessary authority over their respective militias, and to empower them to arrest and commit for trial such of their respective inhabitants on the western frontiers, as might appear to have been concerned in any conspiracy against the United States.

Mr. Clymer was appointed to this important and confidential service on the eleventh of December, 1777, and a few days after accepted the appointment. At this period the enemy was in possession of Philadelphia, and congress was assembled in Yorktown; Mr. Clymer then resided on the Susquehannah river, from whence he departed, in the beginning of the year 1778, to perform the duties of his mission. The non-attendance of the other commissioners greatly obstructed the accomplishment of the objects for which they had been appointed; the following extract of a letter from Mr. Clymer, dated Pittsburgh, twenty-first April, 1778, shows the unsupported situation in which he was placed, and the improbability of a successful result to his labours :

"Many a melancholy moment have I had in reflecting that I was at so great a distance from those so dear to me : I do not, indeed, repent my coming here, because I have been in the discharge of my duty, although, after all, little good, I believe, will proceed from it. If others had shown the same readiness, there would possibly have been a very different scene of things from the present. The Indians have broke out again, and about sixty miles from hence, have done considerable mischief, and there is no present remedy to apply,—the inhabitants being too spiritless or too sullen to assemble to oppose them."

Mr. Clymer, however, in conjunction with Messrs. Matthews and M'Dowell, proceeded to perform his duties, by searching into the existing causes of disaffection, and examining such individuals as were suspected of being hostile to the interests of the country. He also engaged, to the extent of his power, in the general objects of the mission, although, from various causes, his exertions were not fully crowned with success. The commissioners having terminated their labours, advised congress of the result on the twenty-seventh of April, from which it appeared that the cruelties already exercised were merely the commencement of an Indian war, instigated by the British, and persevered in by the savages from a belief, industriously inculcated by the enemy, that the forbearance of the United States resulted from their inability to revenge the outrages which had been committed. Congress therefore resolved to take the most energetic measures for the reduction of Detroit, and the conquest of the Indians, by levying a large body of men, and carrying the war into the enemy's country.

While Mr. Clymer resided at Pittsburgh, he experienced a narrow escape from the tomahawk of the enemy. He was riding to the house of general Neville, situated at some distance from the town. There was a division in the road, both branches of which led to his place of destination, but his good fortune prevailing, he selected that which conducted him in safety to it; for on the same day, and at the same period of it, a white man was murdered by an Indian on the road which Mr. Clymer had rejected.

In the year 1780, the disasters in the southern states had created universal depression, and the commander in chief found himself surrounded with difficulties of the most alarming nature. His pressing requisitions for men were uncomplied with, and his troops were with difficulty prevented from

perishing with cold and hunger. In the beginning of the year, a number of the patriotic citizens of Philadelphia, with a view of relieving this distress, and preventing the disbanding of the army, which was seriously apprehended, established a bank for the sole purpose of supplying and transporting three millions of rations and three hundred hogsheads of rum for the use of the army. No pecuniary advantages were to be derived from this undertaking, and the establishment of a bank was merely intended to facilitate the transaction. Information of this generous and disinterested offer being communicated to congress, on the twenty-second of June, 1780, it was received with the highest marks of approbation. It was immediately resolved, that, as on the one hand, the associators, animated to this laudable exertion by a desire to relieve the national necessities, did not intend to derive from it the least pecuniary advantage, so, on the other, it was just and reasonable that they should be fully reimbursed and indemnified; that the congress entertained a high sense of the liberal offer of the associators, which they accepted as a distinguished proof of their patriotism; that the faith of the United States should be pledged to the subscribers to the bank, for their effectual reimbursement and indemnity; and, that bills for 150,000*l.* sterling on the American ministers in Europe, should be deposited in the bank in support of its credit, and as an indemnity to the subscribers. Mr. Clymer was among the most active and efficient members of this association, and one of those gentlemen selected to preside over the institution. Although its powerful and happy effects are now nearly forgotten, they were extensively and gratefully felt at the time, and it continued to promote the resources of the war until the establishment of the bank of North America, at the suggestion of Robert Morris.

In November, 1780, Mr. Clymer received from the speaker of the Pennsylvania assembly, an official notice of his third election to congress. On the succeeding day, he resumed his seat in the great council of the nation, and displayed the same activity, intelligence, and perseverance, which had characterized his previous exertions in the discharge of his congressional duties. From this time to the twelfth of November, 1782, comprehending a space of nearly two years, he devoted himself so faithfully and indefatigably to the public service, that he was not absent more than a few weeks from his seat, a portion of which was employed in the business of congress. It is impossible to specify the number of committees upon which he served, and the vast variety of current business, in the transaction of which he displayed so much shrewdness and ability; but his well known capacity attracted a large share of the confidence of congress, and gave him little time to attend to his private affairs, or indulge in the ease and enjoyments of domestic life.

When the plan for establishing a national bank was submitted to congress by the financier, it received the warm support of Mr. Clymer, who was appointed, together with Mr. John Nixon, to receive the subscriptions. He always evinced the most decided interest in the prosperity of this institution, which, under the guidance of an able director, had become a most powerful support of the American cause, and relieved the distresses of the army in one of the most gloomy and appalling epochs of the revolution. At a subsequent period, when he held a seat in the legislature of the state, his indignation was highly excited at the opposition made to the renewal of the charter of the bank, which had been repealed by the preceding assembly. Being one of the committee to which the memorial of the citizens of Philadelphia praying for a renewal of the charter, was referred, he did not re-

strain his honest feelings, being regardless of consequences when in the discharge of his duty.

At the representations of Mr. Morris, the superintendant of the finances, it was considered necessary, by congress, to adopt more active measures to procure from the several states their quotas for the purposes of the war. Mr. Clymer hence received a renewed pledge of the confidence of congress, by being appointed, on the twenty-second of May, 1782, with Mr. Rutledge to repair to the southern states, and to make such representations as were best adapted to their several circumstances, and might induce them to carry the requisitions of congress into effect with the greatest despatch.

In November, 1782, Mr. Clymer, having retired from his seat in congress, removed his family to Princeton, in New Jersey, for the purpose of educating his children at Nassau-Hall. The prospects of the country had brightened, and believing the objects of the war to be on the point of consummation, he considered that his assistance was no longer necessary, and that, after so much toil and trouble, he could honourably retire to the enjoyments of domestic life. The strong affection which he entertained for his children would not, under such circumstances, admit of a separation, and he therefore resolved to transfer his whole family to Princeton, where their education was to be completed. His removal into another state distinctly proves how little personal ambition was mingled with his patriotic exertions. He had, for many years, laboured with indefatigable ardour for the attainment of one glorious object, and when that object was about to be realized, he abandoned the political rewards which he had, in a conspicuous manner, merited, and retired from the walks of public life.

The proud and happy consciousness of having acted well his part, at a time when duty was danger, and hesitation disgrace, crowned the retirement of Mr. Clymer with happiness and honour. To one who had been tossed about amidst turmoils and troubles, and whose mind had been in a constant state of political agitation, for many years, it must indeed have been a sweet and consoling gratification to sit down calmly in the bosom of his family, reflecting upon the deeds which he had done, and smiling upon the happiness around him. But the principle of public duty retained all its pristine vigour, and an intimation that his services were required in his native state, was all-sufficient to call it into action, and cause him to abandon the quietude of Princeton, for new honours and new scenes in Philadelphia.

In the year 1784, the spirit of political discord distracted the state of Pennsylvania, and great exertions were made in opposition to the constitutionalists, the prevailing party, who derived their name from the active support which they gave to the old constitution. To aid in opposing this party and their principles, Mr. Clymer was summoned from his Princeton retirement in the fall of 1784; and at the ensuing election was appointed to the legislature, to co-operate with Robert Morris and Thomas Fitzsimmons, in relation to that important object.

We need not trace the steps of Mr. Clymer throughout the whole course of his career in the assembly of Pennsylvania. He trod in the same undeviating path which led him to distinction in the general council of the nation. The same principles of political probity were the foundation of all his thoughts and actions. Independent of all guide but his own conscience, indefatigable in the promotion of public good, and inexorable in his opposition to those who endeavoured to retard it, he became one of the most useful and in-

fluential members of the house. As a constant member of committees, the organs by which the business of almost all legislative bodies is conducted, he performed his various duties with cool and characteristic perseverance. Upon all occasions which appeared particularly to claim his co-operation, his abilities were conspicuous, and in the transaction of minor affairs, he was diligent and considerate.

A measure of sound and humane policy was adopted by the legislature, during the membership of Mr. Clymer, which conferred a large share, not only of legislative, but of christian, honour upon those who supported it. To Mr. Clymer, then, who brought forward that measure, a larger and a brighter portion of praise is due; and it must, in after life, have ever been to him a soothing reflection, that he had given birth to a system which mitigated the sufferings, while it checked the vices, of his fellow creatures.

The sanguinary nature of the penal code of Pennsylvania had long been deprecated by those citizens opposed to the destruction of human life under any pretext whatever, and by those who, admitting the right and necessity in extreme cases, believed that sound policy demanded its modification. Among the latter was Mr. Clymer. His strong mind, seizing the mode of alleviation, never relaxed its grasp until it triumphed in its adoption. The measure, however, was not submitted to the consideration of the house by himself: his retiring modesty seldom permitted him to court notice by going forward himself, when he could obtain others to act as his representatives. It appears to have been a systematic plan with him, to conceive useful projects, and grant their execution to others, being always willing to play a second part, provided the matters in which he was interested were properly performed. A committee being appointed of which he was a member, a report was drawn up by him and sub-

mitted to the consideration of the house, strenuously recommending an amelioration of the penal code, and the abolishment of capital punishments in all cases excepting those of the most flagrant nature.

Mr. Clymer laboured with untiring perseverance in support of this humane and salutary measure. On few occasions of his life did he exert himself more warmly and ably in the accomplishment of what he considered an important object. Although a zealous friend to the great principles of the law, he was strongly opposed to those details in it, which, without amendment, were calculated to destroy its usefulness. On the present occasion, he maintained that the fittest punishment of a criminal was that which, when meditated upon at the time, would be most likely to deter him from the commission of it: and in this view he believed that the contemplation of a long imprisonment would be of more effect than that of death. As a matter of distant contingency, we are apt to despise death, though we should tremble at the least chance of a long imprisonment: indeed were the alternatives to be submitted to our choice, as immediate certainties, such is our nature, that we should shrink more from the thoughts of death, than of imprisonment. This is the light in which he maintained that the question should be considered, in constructing a criminal code. Laws should be preventive more than vindictive. He also insisted, with Gibbon, that whenever the offence inspires less horror than the punishment, the rigour of penal law is obliged to give way to the common feelings of mankind; and with Robertson, that amongst people of corrupted morals, maxims of jurisprudence too severe and unrelenting, by rendering men ferocious and desperate, would be more apt to multiply crimes than to restrain them. Nor did he fail to urge that the sight of human suffering tends to extinguish sensibility, and suppress the feelings of nature.

Such were the main principles which guided Mr. Clymer in his endeavours to ameliorate the penal laws of Pennsylvania; and thus he became peculiarly instrumental in causing her to act with a salutary indulgence to her own misguided sons, and to set an example of humanity to mankind. The policy was sound, as well as humane: it has resisted the attacks of those who were blindly attached to the former system; it has triumphantly stood the test of experience; it has been adopted by some of her sister states, and is daily gaining ground in other parts of the world.

Mr. Clymer vigorously opposed certain additions to the penal code, as destructive to its proper effect: he deprecated the exposure of criminals, by employing them in labour in the streets and highways, with chains and badges, as impolitic and useless, and operating less as a punishment to themselves, or a terror to others, than to beget a greater insensibility to virtue or to shame. He maintained that absolute seclusion, in all countries where the experiment had been tried, generally and in a short time, broke the most hardened dispositions, and most inflexible tempers; and that nothing could be more effectual than the establishment of penitentiaries, where criminals might be separately immured, and secluded from the view and intercourse of the world. The people, moreover, were offended by the exposure; and criminals enjoyed opportunities of communicating with their free comrades, and of concerting means of escape.

The old articles of confederation, which had conducted the nation in safety through the war, were found too weak to bind together the states, when released from the pressure of an external foe. The American people, as a necessary consequence, were neither prosperous at home, nor respectable abroad. The enemies of our republican system had already begun to predict its downfall, and its friends to apprehend it. When in

this uncertain and unpromising state of things, it was determined to call a convention to form a more efficient constitution for the general government, Mr. Clymer, while yet a member of the legislature, was sent as a deputy to that body. In the deliberations of that illustrious assembly, he evinced the most enlightened and liberal views, and united in recommending the instrument which had been framed, to the people of the United States.

When this constitution was adopted by the requisite number of states, and was about to be carried into execution, he was elected a member of the first house of representatives by a large majority of the people of Pennsylvania. His election took place in the month of November, 1788, at a meeting of the conferees appointed by the different counties of the state, and held at Lancaster. The deputies from Philadelphia were elected by a large town meeting, which directed them to place the name of Mr. Clymer upon the general ticket. On the eighth of April, 1789, the oath required by the new constitution was administered to him by the chief justice of New York, where congress then sat, and he again united his talents with those of the assembled sages of the general legislature. He pursued with an undeviating step, the same principles that had uniformly marked his former progress, and gave an unqualified support to all those measures which so largely contributed to the honour and welfare of the nation, and conferred so much distinction upon what is termed the Washington administration.

The rigid republicanism of Mr. Clymer rendered him averse from all titular distinctions; hence he opposed the addition of any title either to the president or vice-president. After adverting to the high and lofty titles assumed by the most impotent potentates, and proving by experience that so far from conferring power, they frequently made their pos-

sessors ridiculous, he proceeded to reprove this growing predilection of his countrymen. Titular distinctions, said he, are said to be unpopular in the United States, yet a person would be led to think otherwise, from the vast number of honourable gentlemen we have in America. As soon as a man is selected for the public service, his fellow citizens, with liberal hand, shower down titles on him,—either excellency or honourable. He would venture to affirm there were more honourable esquires in the United States, than all the world beside. He wished to check a propensity so notoriously evidenced in favour of distinctions, and hoped the example of the house might prevail, to extinguish the predilection that appeared in favour of titles.

It was a saying of Mr. Clymer's that "a representative of the people is appointed to think *for* and not *with* his constituents," and in conformity with this doctrine, he was one of those who invariably, during the whole course of their political career, showed a total disregard to the opinions of his constituents when opposed to the matured decisions of his own mind. His ideas upon this subject closely coincided with those of Burke, and he might, with him, have addressed this language to his constituents, without uttering a sentiment, or urging an argument, which he did not feel: "Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative, to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication, with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion, high respect; their business, unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions, to theirs; and, above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men

living. These he does not derive from your pleasure; no, nor from the law nor the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion." "Government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and what sort of reason is that, in which the determination precedes the discussion; in which one set of men deliberate, and another decide; and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the argument? To deliver an opinion is the right of all men; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear, and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But *authoritative* instructions; *mandates* issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience; these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution." Mr. Clymer does not appear to have considered the entirely different nature of the two governments, and the great want of resemblance in the constitution of their representative bodies, as at all affecting this reasoning; but possessing such principles in their fullest extent, and stung with the idea of being mentally subservient to any class of men whatever, he warmly opposed the proposition introducing a clause in the constitution which conferred upon the people the unalienable right of instructing their representatives. No one felt more indignant at the dependence which it would necessarily create, than he did. Do gentlemen, said he, foresee the extent of these words? If they have a constitutional right to instruct us, it

infers that we are bound by those instructions, and as we ought not to decide constitutional questions by implication, I presume that we shall be called upon to go further, and expressly declare the members of the legislature to be bound by the instructions of their constituents. This is a most dangerous principle, utterly destructive of all ideas of an independent and deliberative body, which are essential requisites in the legislatures of free governments: they prevent men of abilities and experience from rendering those services to the community that are in their power, destroying the object contemplated by establishing an efficient general government, and rendering congress a mere passive machine.

When the naturalization bill came under the consideration of congress, a long discussion ensued relative to the facilities which ought to be afforded to aliens, both as to holding property, and becoming citizens of the country. The existing abuses in regard to their stolen privileges, and the illegality of the votes taken at elections, demanded a speedy remedy. In the debate upon this subject, Mr. Clymer was of opinion that foreigners ought to be gradually admitted to the rights of citizens, and that a residence for a certain time should entitle them to hold property; but that the higher privileges of citizens, such as electing, or being elected into office should require a longer term. Permitting these rights to be assumed, and exercised at a shorter period, would not operate as any inducement to persons to emigrate, as the great object of emigration is generally that of procuring a more comfortable subsistence, or to better the circumstances of the individuals. He thought the exercises of particular privileges was but a secondary consideration. But the opinions of Mr. Clymer are more fully developed in the following extract from his manuscript memoranda: "Aliens might, with no less advantage than native citizens, be vested with every right of pro-

perty; but none of the political rights should be entrusted to them, until after a long probation: and this would not be in any way unjust; for a stranger comes into a new country to be relieved from the oppressions of the old, or to better his personal condition, and not to govern it. In the countries from which strangers generally come to us, it is the part of the people to obey; a simple lesson, easily learned: but in our country it is their part to govern, which requires a long preparation of habits and of knowledge; and it is a part which strangers are unfit to act. He comes either with a disposition already broken to some degree of slavery, or with a superstitious reverence for the despotism to which custom has reconciled him; and wishes to assimilate the powers of his new to his old government. Or, from a hatred of the old, from its oppressions which he has felt, he becomes, from a want of discriminating knowledge, an enemy to all governments whatsoever, and is, of course, the factious and turbulent partisan of anarchy and disorder."

He supported the assumption of the state debts as a measure which, while it ought to be acted upon with caution, was necessary for the preservation of the union. He observed, that the unauthorized debts assumed would be sufficiently covered in the gross demand which the states would have against the United States, when their accounts should be finally made up. It was objected that it would be difficult to find the means of satisfying both the federal and state debts consolidated; to this he replied, that congress could not assume the state debts without assuming, at the same time, those very means which otherwise the states would employ in extinguishing their debts, were they left on their own hands; and that in this case, it would be as easy to satisfy both species of debt as one. The too great dependence of the states upon the United States, which would ensue from a transfer

of the power of providing for their own debts, was also stated as an objection to the measure. Mr. Clymer answered, that if a condition of absolute dependency on the general government was to follow this measure, it would only be the anticipation of a necessary event; for, on the final settlement of accounts, whatever debts were then due to the states must be assumed, and in like manner provided for by congress, in taking the taxation out of the hands of the states.

In the debate touching that portion of the tonnage bill which proposed a discrimination between foreign nations, Mr. Clymer appealed to the public acts of America for the sentiments of the people respecting it, from which it appeared that Great Britain was regarded in commerce as a foreign nation; but it was the wish of all to increase the commerce between France and the United States. In common with his colleagues he strongly relied upon public opinion, and the sentiments which had been unequivocally expressed throughout the union, which were against placing foreign nations generally on a level with the allies of the country. He thought it important to prove to those nations who had declined forming commercial treaties with them, that the United States possessed and would exercise the power of retaliating any regulations unfavourable to their trade, and insisted stongly on the advantages of America in a war of commercial regulations, should this measure produce one. The claims of France on the gratitude of the American people were urged in favour of the principle for which he contended. It was also maintained that the commerce between the United States and Great Britain had exceeded its natural boundary. "The little trade," said he, "carried on between France and America is favourable to us; that to Great Britain, the contrary. We receive money for what we carry to France, with which our mercantile operations are increased; we are not paid

with rum, as in our British West India trade. This is a fact of notoriety; it has become a subject of complaint in that country, that we take no return in manufactures from her as we do from a neighbouring nation. These advantages, therefore, backed by the voice of the people, warrant a preference of the nature of that which is now intended."

At the expiration of the first congressional term of two years, he declined a re-election, which closed his long, laborious, and able, legislative career. But he was not permitted to remain in the shade of private life. President Washington had long known his worth and respected his virtues, and now destined him to fill one of the most arduous situations in the state.

In 1791 a bill was introduced in congress, conforming to the report of the secretary of the treasury, imposing a duty on spirits distilled within the United States, which notwithstanding the vehement opposition of the southern and western members, was carried by a considerable majority. A large portion of the population, especially that which had spread itself over the extensive regions of the west, consuming imported articles to a very inconsiderable amount, was not much affected by the imposts on foreign merchandise. But the present duty, reaching this part of society, it was consequently indisposed to the tax. The opponents of the bill contended that other sources of revenue, less exceptionable and odious, might be explored. The duty was branded with the hateful epithet of an excise, a species of taxation, it was said, so peculiarly oppressive as to be abhorred even in England; and which was totally incompatible with the spirit of liberty. The facility with which it might be extended to other objects, was urged against its admission into the American system, as well as the great hostility manifested against

it in some of the states, which might endanger the lives of the revenue officers, from the fury of the people.

The arguments of those who supported the law having however prevailed, it was necessary to confide its execution to men, who would discharge their duties with moderation but firmness. Mr. Clymer was placed at the head of the excise department in the state of Pennsylvania. The odium which the act, and the officers who executed it, encountered, and the insurrection it occasioned are matters of history. The discontents in other parts of the union had been dissipated by the prudence and firmness of the government, and the law had been carried into general operation; but in the district of Pennsylvania lying west of the Alleghany mountains, the resistance wore the appearance of system, and was regularly progressive. Violence and outrage accompanied the opposition of the malcontents. It was the duty of Mr. Clymer, as supervisor, to appoint collectors in each county, but for a considerable time every person was deterred from consenting to permit an office to be held at his house. When this difficulty was supposed to have been overcome, those who had been prevailed on to accede to the propositions of the supervisor, were compelled by threats and personal violence to retract their consent.

To subdue the opposition which continued to gather fresh force, and to burst out into the most lawless acts, it was prudently determined to resort in the first place to the arm of the law. To prove its strength, Mr. Clymer was sent into the very theatre of insurrection for the purpose of collecting evidence against the principal actors. He proceeded to the spot, at the risk of his life, and it appears to have been considered by government as an extremely hazardous enterprize. He was directed to proceed as far as Bedford, from which place he was escorted to Pittsburgh by a troop of

horse, detached for that purpose, from the army of general Wayne. His exertions were unremitting, and he did every thing which his instructions would permit; but it has been asserted that they were contrived by the then attorney general, to defeat the object which they were ostensibly intended to promote

The duties of this office being disagreeable to him, he was induced to resign it, after having firmly borne a full share of the odium which, in the minds of little men and of the malcontents, was attached to it. An instance of this general impression occurred soon after his return from the performance of his duties as supervisor, in the publication of a sarcastic piece relative to his travelling in a feigned character to Bedford. Mr. Clymer, who never was disposed patiently to submit to any indignity, went to the office of the printer, where a personal conflict arose between them, which fortunately terminated in no very serious result. His notions of independence and right were not abstractly confined to national affairs, and he always demanded towards himself that politeness and respect which he was ever careful to show to others.

The resignation of his office in the excise did not, as he intended, release Mr. Clymer from public duty. In the year 1796, he was appointed, together with colonel Hawkins and colonel Pickins, to negotiate a treaty with the Cherokee and Creek Indians in Georgia, which was satisfactorily effected in the month of June. The authorities of Georgia wished to dispossess the Indians without recompense, but the general government interfered, and appointed commissioners to treat with them. In the month of April, Mr. Clymer departed from Philadelphia for Savannah, in a vessel not only unfit, but unsafe, to perform the voyage. The consequence of this ill-advised economy on the part of

the governmental agent was the extreme danger of the lives on board. After a stormy passage, a harbour was made in Charleston to the great relief of the crew, who had been kept incessantly labouring at the pumps. He arrived with Mrs. Clymer, on the twenty-ninth of April; they were soon abundantly compensated for the maritime dangers and privations which they endured, by the warm-hearted hospitality which characterizes the city of Charleston. "This town," he remarks in one of his letters, "impresses me very agreeably. People of fortune live in excellent, airy houses, with abundance of ground about them; without the appearance of form and ceremony, but with great hospitality. A northern tour, to them, can be only to avoid the greater heat of the climate; the leaving home in other respects must be a sacrifice." In another letter he observes, "The hospitality of South Carolina, not in the least oppressive, is real and unaffected; and your reception, every where, is such as sets you immediately at ease."

On the eleventh of April, Mr. Clymer arrived at Savannah, and on the next day proceeded to St. Mary's, The day fixed upon to meet the other commissioners being the first of June, he did not immediately continue his journey to the appointed spot. But during this interval he was not idle, as his journal amply attests: it contains a vast variety of information upon almost every topic, but particularly agriculture. The following extract affords an example of the minuteness with which he sought after knowledge, and the constitutional desire for mental improvement which he possessed. "This country appears to be but bad; the soil sand, with a bottom in some places of tough clay, the produce, tall pines and scrubby palmets, with here and there a hammock, (as it is called,) of live oaks, &c. It will, however, yield, by dint of heat, a good deal, and with variety almost infinite. Take an

example : M. de Borel, a Saint Domingo fugitive, settled here with sixty or seventy negroes on five hundred acres, and has planted one hundred and sixty ; here are to be found, cotton, Indian corn, beans, peas, potatoes red and white, rice, indigo, all the vegitables, orange trees, limes, lemons, pomegranates, nectarines, mulberries, peaches, a great variety of the grapes of France, succeeding perfectly well, &c. &c. I believe, indeed, the soil will leave the tiller behind-hand after a year or two, unless recruited with cow-penning, which you every where hear spoken of;—the great range admitting of large herds of cattle. But a country cannot have many people in it, and large cattle ranges too. Hogs might be raised in abundance, but for wolves and panthers. Mr. Seagrove put forty-five sows at Point Peter last year, a small projection of land, a few miles from hence ; but they, and all their progeny, one excepted, fell in a short time a prey to these devourers."

At length, after a long and tedious council, the treaty with the Indians was concluded on the twenty-ninth of June. "Our treaty," he writes, "finished yesterday at noon, and the last signing is just published by our cannon. I am sure it is an honest treaty, for it was negotiated without artifice or threats ; it is honest because it will greatly benefit each of the contracting parties ; it is honest because it is protested against by the Georgia commissioners, who found all the customary avenues to the Indian lands barred by the principles we had laid down in conducting it. In signing this treaty, I have contended against the low-lived practice of rendering the names of the chiefs as known among the traders and interpreters, which never fails to disgrace and degrade all the solemn transactions with these people ; so that you will have neither English Jack nor the mad Hog, but such names as Opìo-mèco, Tustinèca-thlòcco, and others equally soft, sonorous, and significant, like that of Don Quixote's horse."

With regard to the out-post where the treaty was concluded, he observes, "The spot where we are is enlivened from its being the scene of negotiation, but we shall soon leave it to its natural gloominess. Imagine five or six men, well entitled, from their good temper and deportment, to be called gentlemen, shut up in the midst of melancholy pines, wasting their existence on a desert air; their weariness seldom relieved but by the beats of the drum, and the puerile round of garrison duty. No doubt most of them wish they had not set so high a value on honour, as to seek it in a military life. They seem to feel their misery. As to the soldiers, they have relaxation enough in leap-frog, driving the bull to market, trap-ball," &c.

The Indian character continues to be so unjustly vilified and abused, that no apology is necessary for introducing an example, tending to soften its features, together with the remarks of Mr. Clymer, predicated upon his personal observations, and upon the information which he collected: "The strongest passions of the Indians are revenge and benevolence. Revenge in them must be distinguished from the same spirit among the whites: having no government, or at least, no public institutions to avenge a wrong, revenge is nearly with them as justice is with us; not so much proceeding from a heart retaining resentment, as from a sense of duty. Their general disposition and habits, are those of kindness. This has just been evidenced. When the young warriors who tracked and brought back two deserters to Colerain, were told what might be the punishment for desertion, they were extremely unhappy, and begged they might be pardoned; and it was their intercession chiefly which moved the commissioners in favour of the deserters."

At length Mr. and Mrs. Clymer embarked at St. Mary's on the twentieth of July, and after a disagreeable passage,

arrived at Norfolk on the thirty-first of the same month. Thus terminated the political life of Mr. Clymer, which endured, with short intervals, for more than twenty years. He had now leisure to reflect upon the chequered scenes through which he had passed, and to enjoy the soothing conviction that no act of his long life had cast the slightest blemish upon his public or private reputation.

——————————Servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.

He was subsequently elected the first president of the Philadelphia Bank, and of the Academy of Fine Arts, on the establishment of those institutions; and vice president of the Philadelphia Agriculture Society upon its re-organization in 1805: all these offices he continued to hold until his decease, and was constant in the performance of the duties attached to them.

Mr. Clymer possessed strong intellects from nature, which he improved by culture and study. "Firm, but not obstinate; independent, but not arrogant; communicative, but not obtrusive; he was at once the amiable and instructive companion. Retired, studious, contemplative, he was ever adding something to his knowledge; and endeavouring to make that knowledge useful. His predominant passion was to promote every scheme for the improvement of his country, whether in science, agriculture, polite education, the useful or the fine arts. It was in the social circle of friendship that his acquirements were displayed and appreciated, and although their action was communicated from this circle to a wider sphere, it was with an enfeebled force." Diffident and retired, while capable of teaching, he seemed only anxious to learn. He sought in vain to conceal from the world the ex-

traordinary talents which he possessed, or to shrink from the honourable consideration in which they were held. He never solicited preferment, and would have remained in the private walks of life, had not a sense of duty, and the voice of his country, called him into public usefulness. He never sought popularity, and the large portion of it which he enjoyed, arose solely from a conviction on the part of the people, that he would diligently and faithfully discharge his duty.

He possessed a mind perseveringly directed towards the promotion of useful objects; an uncommon zeal in the service of individuals and of public institutions; a delicacy and disinterestedness of which there are few examples; a profound love of rational liberty and hatred of tyranny; a happy serenity and cheerfulness of mind; a vigour and originality of thought; moderation of sentiment and purity of heart. The kindness and urbanity of his manners endeared him to all his associates, while the simplicity which was a marked feature of his character, did not permit him to assume an offensive or unreasonable control over their opinions. His conversation was of the most instructive kind, and manifested an extensive knowledge of books and men. He possessed the rare quality of never traducing or speaking ill of the absent, or endeavouring to debase their characters. His benevolence of disposition and liberality of sentiment, were always conspicuous; and these ennobling sentiments were evidenced in a distinguished manner, by his having been the principal promoter of the amelioration of the state penal code.

He was scrupulous and punctual in his attention to what may be termed the minor or secondary duties of life, or to those engagements which, being merely voluntary, are so often considered as of no moral or binding force. In the public bodies over which he presided, he knew that his presence and services were relied on for their operations and

usefulness; he felt the responsibility of the stations, and that it was through his instrumentality alone that their proceedings could be properly conducted; and he never permitted any idle humour, or party of pleasure, to allure him from the post of duty. In all the engagements, however trivial of private life, he observed the same punctilious system. "He who justly estimates the value of a punctual performance of a promise, will not, without very good reason, disregard it, whether it be to sign a contract or walk with a friend; to pay a debt, or present a toy to a child." In this most useful virtue, Mr. Clymer was pre-eminent.

His pretensions to eloquence were limited, and he seldom appeared as a public speaker; but when his diffidence was conquered by feelings of duty, and when he did speak, he was listened to with universal attention, because his speeches were short, and always to the purpose. A more general regard to this habit would not be useless at the present day: ad captandum orators would less frequently heat and irritate the public mind, and the business of large bodies would be conducted with less bustle and more celerity. His style of epistolary writing, in which he extensively engaged, was playful and easy, and, when occasions required it, forcible and convincing. He was critical in his phraseology, and somewhat formal in the construction of his sentences. In his moments of leisure, he frequently amused himself by composing pieces of light poetry, some of which bear the marks of considerable talent and humour. A few days before he expired, he dictated a piece of this nature, relative to the British and their navy.

His characteristic brevity and depth of reasoning are apparent in the aphorisms, laconic sayings, and pungent remarks, contained in the writings which he has left, a portion of which are worthy of extraction:

To go to Canton is not to satisfy curiosity: it is looking at the outside of a show-box.

Mere swearing in conversation is nothing but powder without ball.

A habit must be a practice, but a practice may not be a habit.

The bow loses it spring, that is always bent; and the mind will never do much, unless it sometimes does nothing.

Some men's minds are like looking-glasses; for having no images or impressions of their own, they can but reflect those of other people.

It is a hard condition of society where a man's duties seem to lie one way, and his reason another.

Some people may be compared to sieves, so fully does every thing they hear pass through them; but unlike common sieves, they sift larger instead of smaller.

To make a lawyer, a subtle understanding is required: to make a legislator, a great mind.

The artificial reasoning of the law is our natural reason, read backward like a witch's prayer: this reasoning is much boasted of by Coke and other lawyers, and is said to be the perfection of man's reason.

A printer publishes a lie; for which he ought to stand in the pillory. the people believe in the lie and act upon it; and "the voice of the people is the voice of God;" and so the saying ends in a blasphemy. It is less difficult to impose upon a whole million than upon one of the million: you can attempt the one only by something like sense; but the million are always to be moved by sound.

An enterprising merchant is like a bottle filled with a fermentable liquid; neither giving signs of weakness until the moment it bursts outright.

The sudden admiration of over-rated excellence, like yeast, rises but to fall again.

A judge should be as learned in the laws as if he had had no other study; and his mind should be as unfettered by the laws as if he were a perfect stranger to them.

Old clothes have so far the advantage of old wit, that they may be used at second hand.

Civility always requires to see you; hopes you are well; makes kind inquiries; and perpetually offers its little services.

Politeness is more ceremonious; has a constant respect for your opinions; contradicts with the utmost deference; and gives place to you upon all occasions.

Good breeding is ever guarded in its address, and discreetly keeps free from subjects that might be in the slightest degree unwelcome.

The civil man may be of gross manners, without either politeness or good breeding. The polite man may not fall upon any of the common topics of civility, and may stumble upon things which good breeding avoids. The well-bred man is of a higher order: the former two are made by disposition;—he, by sense; he must be polite, but may not run too much upon civilities.

Monarchy is a high tower set upon a sunken plain: in a republic, there may be no tower; but the general level is higher.

Money and water may be compared together in the circumstance of their expenditure;—both running off, the one in the proportion of its heap, or quantity, and the other, according to its height or head: with this frequent difference, however, that the running of the water regularly diminishes as the head subsides, whereas the running of the money does not decrease with the sinking of the stock from which it is taken,

but may go on rather with an accelerated volocity, until the whole is gone. Hence it is that overgrown fortunes often come to an end sooner than moderate ones; and hence the folly, and improvidence, as it may be called, of great acquisitions for children.

Possessing the sensibility and delicacy which are essential to taste, Mr. Clymer had of course a peculiar fondness for the fine arts, elegant literature, and the refined pursuits of a cultivated genius. Music and painting appear to have particularly invited his attention, and exercised his judgement. The importance which he attached to the encouragement of the fine arts in general, led him, in the year 1805, to co-operate zealously in the foundation of the academy which now subsists. At that time the idea of such an establishment had never presented itself to the imaginations of our citizens, and many were at a loss to conjecture its object and uses. Notwithstanding the liberality of public patronage, the practicability of the scheme was denied by some, and doubted by many. But the popularity and high-standing of those who embarked as leaders in the undertaking, attracted a just and merited confidence; and the institution was established. To secure the extension and continuance of this patronage, it was necessary to place at the head of it, a man on whose judgment the public might properly hang their faith, and on whose recommendation, they might prudently afford their support. With such impressions and views, Mr. Clymer at once presented himself to the founders of the academy as a person eminently qualified and entitled to be placed at its head. The experiment justified the choice, and he continued in that situation till the time of his death.

Justly considering agriculture as the most useful and independent of all human pursuits, he availed himself of every opportunity to acquire a knowledge of its theory and practice.

Although not a practical agriculturist, his conviction of the all-essential uses and general importance of such associations, induced and stimulated his successful exertions, as the main instrument in establishing the Philadelphia Agricultural Society, in 1785, of which, as already mentioned, he was, for many years, a vice president, and held that station until the time of his decease. He assisted with a zeal patriotic and intelligent, in promoting the knowledge and interests of agriculture, and afforded one among many other proofs, that practical husbandry depends for its improvement and prosperity, more on science and the acquirements of well educated and public spirited men, who devote a portion of their means, time, and talents, to the principles of it, than on the limited experience and uninstructed examples of merely practical husbandmen. Whilst the miseries and dangers of war create a necessity for characters distinguished in the arts and works of destruction, and portraits of heroes are exhibited as remembrances of achievements, attractive because they are dazzling and brilliant, it is as meritoriously exemplary, and as highly obligatory to commemorate retiring, yet conspicuous, worth and talents, employed in the equally honourable, and far more desirable and salutary, ARTS OF PEACE.

In relation to the progress of agriculture in this country, he makes the following remarks in a letter dated the twenty-eighth of June, 1809: "Concerning agricultural improvements, I am perhaps single in my opinion. It is that American improvements will be faster and more universal than those of any other country; and the notion is founded upon the one fact, that the workers of the soil are almost universally the same with the proprietors. Proprietors, as they have a greater interest in improvements, have not only the greater spirit, but the better capacity for them, than the tenants, who almost every where throughout Europe, are the cultivators;

and our country will possess this advantage, so long as the laws of descents continue as they are. The effect of such laws upon the good of society is more than that of any particular form of government."

His researches were various, and if not always profound, they were competent to his purposes, and not beyond his pretensions. Science, literature, and the arts, had all a share of his attention, and it was only by a frequent intercourse with him, that the extent of his knowledge of each could be discovered. His private letters are filled with plans of machinery, agricultural implements, water works, canals, bridges, &c. &c. as well as valuable recipes, affecting almost every branch of the arts. It was his custom, when conversing with a mechanic, to inquire minutely into the nature of his trade, and its operations : by pursuing this plan, he accumulated a large stock of knowledge relative to the common occupations of mechanics.

A few desultory extracts from the manuscripts of Mr. Clymer will serve to illustrate his character and feelings, as well as the comprehensiveness of his genius, which embraced almost every topic within the scope of the human mind.

In treating of the national debt of Great Britain, he observes, "Mr. Hume and others long ago predicted that if the debt of England should ever swell to a certain size, the nation would necessarily break. But the debt having swelled to above ten times the size, and predictions not being verified, so great is the confidence now become, that a bankruptcy, under any circumstance of debt, is thought impossible. The skin of a man, indeed, will stretch indefinitely, so as to wrap up any growth of morbid flesh or fat; but whether the skin of a nation is endowed with this striking faculty, is yet to be known. Hume failed from not contemplating, at the same time, a growth of the national faculties correspondent to the

supposed increase of her burthen; and the present question should be, can these faculties be stretched further than they now are?"

He strongly deprecated all monopolising systems; "Our feelings," he says, "are more strongly excited against a conquering, than a monopolising, nation. Conquest has to plead ambition or glory, with which the world has always been fascinated; but monopoly has not the excuse of any human passion except avarice, the most ignoble of all. The effects of the monopolising is also more felt than that of the conquering spirit. A country conquered becomes the care of the conqueror; it is seldom more than a change of one bad government for another, in which the people neither lose nor gain. Monopoly makes no conquest, but acts upon a whole people, in repressing all private industry and enterprise. The one makes war upon a nation collectively; the other makes war upon the people individually."

The humour with which he ridicules the claim of sovereignty over the sea by Great Britain, is well adapted to the subject: "England says she has conquered the sea; and hence her right over it; and the plea has been foolishly admitted amongst us. But the prior right is in Venice, who long since was married to the sea, and by a ring, according to the canons. England may pretend a marriage too, but then it is by a fleet, and as forced, and during the subsistence of the former matrimony, is, according to Blackstone, void or voidable. England is not aware that in founding right upon conquest, she gives the right to Bonaparte, who, in the conquest of Venice, succeeds, in the law, to every of her rights, titles, claims, and interests."

"In comparing republics with monarchies," he remarks, "we may suppose a greater consistence and steadiness of conduct in the government of the former than of the latter; and

for this reason, that the administration in a republic being appointed and renewed by the people, must more closely pursue the course of policy and measures best agreeing with the peculiar national character and genius, which are always the same; whereas, in a monarchy, the sovereign with any fixed character, is left at liberty in this respect, and he may or may not pursue the national bent. Hence, under every administration, the incessant warfare of the Romans, which was produced by a steady national passion for conquest and aggrandizement. Is not a republic, if its disposition be warlike, a more dangerous neighbour, on this account, than a monarchy. In a republic, the administration is true to the general passions, and always represent them: a king is true to his own."

Towards the principles of Pitt, and the policy pursued by him, he was resolutely opposed: an epitaph upon that minister, found among Mr. Clymer's papers, sums up in bitter terms all his political misdeeds, and portrays his character in just and vivid colours. The failure of the anticipations of Mr. Pitt, in regard to France, is humorously adverted to by Mr. Clymer: "An almanac-maker was in the yearly custom of predicting the death of Henry IV; and Mr. Pitt has gone on, session after session, in asserting the French to be just upon the point of giving out. The king said of the almanac-maker, this fellow, if he persists, will certainly be right at last: we may possibly say the same of Mr. Pitt. His only mistake, perhaps, was in fixing upon a time, and in the certainty he seemed to be in, that he would be able to hold out longer than the French. He has seen his error at last, and now speaks exactly the language of Nell Gwyn, when she found herself for the first time in her own coach, *Who would have thought it!*"

We find from the following letter addressed to Mr. Law, that the patriotic spirit which enlightened his more youthful

days, had not lost any of its fires at the age of seventy. It is dated in the month of September, 1810.

"Dear sir—The freedom your English friend has taken with us, in his letter to you, will excuse the freedom of the observations I am going to make.

"He seems to think that we Americans are but imperfectly civilized. If by great advancement in poetry, painting, or music; in speculative or demonstrative science, or the arts, he means civilization, he may be right; for in these things we are not perfect. But by civilization, I understand, chiefly, that social temper, those common principles, which act most beneficially upon mankind: and I will give you my notion of the degree in which, under that temper and those principles, we are civilized, negatively; that is, by what *we* do *not*, not by what *we* do.

"We do not, then, as is said of the mouse with a large litter, starve nine of our children to over-feed the tenth.

"We do not impress one man for a guinea, or hang another for a shilling.

"We do not interdict any portion of our people the honourable or lucrative trusts of our country, because these people do not eat their bread, or drink their wine, at the Lord's Supper, according to a certain formula.

"It is not our policy to keep down the wages of the labourer, below the means of his subsistence, that he may become the more dependent for it on our bounty.

"Our laws are not so framed as that the poorer people are necessarily confined to the same district, as deer to the same park.

"We do not find it necessary to keep up the spirit and hardihood of our people, by the public spectacle of executions, whippings, pugilism, or bull-baiting.

"We have no official secret how to keep a coach out of a salary that would hardly find the incumbent in his coat.

"In journeying from Dan to Bersheba, we are not called upon at every step, to discharge the perquisites of hosts of leeches and locusts.

"I might go on with the enumeration, but perhaps there is already enough of it for a comparison, to any one inclined to make it, betwixt our country, and that of your friend."

Mr. Clymer elsewhere prosecutes this subject: "A false notion," he writes, "has got abroad that congress once voted us the most enlightened people on earth, which has given birth, among foreign writers, to abundance of ridicule; but," continues the veteran champion of our rights, "arrogant as any such pretensions would seem to them, it is not incapable of some defence. What is the highest state of civilization? Is it indicated by a superiority in literature, by greater excellence in portrait-painting, music, or oratory, or knowledge of the sciences? Is it not rather by the best practice upon the principles most promotive of the good of mankind, by a better adaptation of the laws and institutions of society to its true interests, and by such tokens as show the improvement of the social character? If this be true, we may compare in civilization with any of the great nations; and perhaps, with much advantage."

At the commencement of the French revolution, he was its warm friend and admirer, because he believed that it afforded the prospect of emancipating a great people from political bondage. He sympathized with them in their cause, because he fondly anticipated that they were about to imitate the example of his own country. He was interested in their incipient exertions, because his heart was capacious, and embraced the whole human race. But when he thought that, instead of honestly and soberly prosecuting the great work

of regeneration, they were exciting disturbances abroad and committing atrocities at home, he abandoned the French nation as totally unprepared for the enjoyment of rational liberty. He pitied their levity and attributed their abasement to the miserable government under which their minds, and those of their progenitors, had been formed. But a strong bias ever influenced his mind in favour of the people who had aided us in our revolutionary struggle; and this predilection is apparent in many of his writings. From among the various observations touching the French revolution, the following have been selected as explanatory of his sentiments in regard to it.

"Burke and other English writers, who have said so much against the French revolution, particularly fix upon the doctrine of equality, confounding that of condition with that of rights. The former figures to you the universal levelling of property, which must forbid every one to retain or acquire more than his proper share; involving in it the discouragement or inutility of all the arts, and a return to the savage state. This representation is easily perceived to be false. As to the other, an original equality of rights, who does not admit the justness of the principle in the abstract? And these writers, in the blindness of their rage, do not see that it is the basis of English liberty, with but a very small exception; for, in all the millions composing the population of Great Britain, there are but a few hundred who have any birth-right pre-eminence over their fellow-men; and this partial distinction is not made for the sake of the abstract principle, but from some fancied or real convenience in government. A king and his family, and the peers who are senators, are all who have their hereditary or created superiority; the rest are commoners, and are treated as such in their life and in their death. Now in France, with the exception of a king,

no governmental use was ever pretended for any privileged order."

"The early interference of England in the French revolution has been the real source of the evils which, for the last sixteen years, have so much afflicted mankind; for it has, in its consequences, given all the powers of the land to France, and of the seas, to herself. Those who support England in this fatal policy, have pleaded the necessity of war, as the proper antidote to the French revolutionary principles; but where was the necessity of war to keep out principles that would have kept out themselves from the odium which the bulk of the English people had been taught to attach to them. Every hundredth man, perhaps, might have been infected with them, but that man, it was found, could be easily restrained by proclamation or persecution. No further proof is wanting of the deceitfulness of this pretence, than the ministerial boast, at all times, that their war was highly popular.—If this was the artificial, what was the natural ground of the war? nothing more than that of any former one, the national hatred always entertained against France, and the occasion so favourable, as it was considered, of reducing the power of an ancient rival. But at the time when the measure of war was first conceived by England, and a thousand circumstances indicated it long before the declaration, if we distinguish between the conduct of the revolution and its fundamental principle, were those principles bad? We are bound, in fact, to consider them as much better than those of the English, as they came nearer to the republican forms, and with promises more favourable to liberty. And, was there then any other excitement to war than those mentioned, it was that if France were suffered to sit quietly down under those forms, they would in time so recommend them-

selves, as to be models for the rest of Europe; and hence might be the fear for English monarchy and aristocracy."

Of the more extended and laboured essays of Mr. Clymer we can only speak in general terms, as abounding in forcible argument, judicious reasoning and nervous language. His exculpation of the political character of Franklin,—his remarks on the French revolution,—his addresses to the members of the Academy of Fine Arts,—and his various political, literary, and scientific essays,— all portray the extent of his knowledge, and the soundness of his understanding.

Mr. Clymer was a man of irreproachable morals, and a pure heart. Possessed of all the generous and social virtues, his benevolence was extensive but discriminating. In the family circle, and in friendly intercourse, he appeared to peculiar advantage, when the ardour of his affections, and his warmth of feeling, were not restrained by the diffidence which avoided their public display. His sensibility was most acute: the death of his eldest son, about the beginning of the revolution, for a long time embittered his existence, and the loss of another, during the expedition against the insurgents in the western parts of Pennsylvania, occasioned a shock so lasting and severe, that his appointment on the mission to Georgia is supposed to have been conferred by the executive, with the view of dissipating his sorrow.

With a purity of morals upon which calumny itself had never sought to cast a blemish, he possessed a singular idea of the bonds which generally confine mankind within the bounds of morality. He believed that it was more a sense of honour, than the moral sense, which guarded against the commission of bad actions, because, under circumstances where actions intrinsically bad may be committed without impeachment of honour, or according to custom or public sanction,

they are very readily adopted. He advances two examples in support of this opinion.

1. A merchant in Philadelphia draws upon a correspondent abroad, who is indebted to him; the correspondent becomes a bankrupt, and the bill is protested. To the original misfortune of losing the debt, a secondary one is added of large damages to the purchaser of the bill, who never conceives that, in exacting them of the drawer, he violates every principle of humanity and natural equity.

2. Two merchants of different nations are in the habits of friendly and useful intercourse, and at all times ready to assist each other's credit to the utmost. Let but a war be declared between their respective sovereigns, and they privateer upon each other's property with as little feeling as if they had been personal enemies.

Mr. Clymer was of the middle size, erect in his person, of a fair complexion, and a pleasing countenance. His features were strongly marked with intelligence and benevolence. He died on the twenty-third of January, 1813, in the seventy-fourth year of his age, at the residence of his son, at Morrisville, Bucks county, Pennsylvania.

He was, indeed, an invaluable member of society, whose loss was keenly felt, and whose memory will be long cherished. To use the eloquent language of Mr. Hopkinson,—at different periods of our national history, from the first bold step which was taken in the march of independence, to its full and perfect consummation in the establishment of a wise and effective system of government, whenever the virtue and talents of our country were put in requisition, Mr. Clymer was found with the selected few to whom our rights and destinies were committed. When posterity shall ponder on the declaration of July, 1776, and admire, with deep amazement

and veneration, the courage and patriotism, the virtue and self-devotion, of the deed, they will find the name of CLYMER there. When the strength and splendour of this empire shall hereafter be displayed in the fulness of maturity, and the future politician shall look at that scheme of government by which the whole resources of a nation have been thus brought into action; by which power has been maintained, and liberty not overthrown; by which the people have been governed and directed, but not enslaved or oppressed; they will find that CLYMER was one of the fathers of the country from whose wisdom and experience the system emanated.

JAMES SMITH.

James Smith, of York county, in Pennsylvania, was perhaps the most eccentric in character of the illustrious men that had the happiness to affix their names to the Declaration of Independence.

Ireland may claim the honour of being his native land; and he retained to the latest hours of a protracted life, that openness of heart and raciness of humour, for which Irishmen are often remarkable, but united with the regular industry and steady virtues that were improved if not implanted by his American education.

The date of his birth has not been ascertained; it was a secret which he carried with him to the grave, an invincible reluctance to reveal his age, even to his nearest relatives or most confidential friends, being one of his peculiarities which remained after he had long survived the period when vanity or interest could possibly supply a motive for it.

It was believed by some members of his family that he was born in the year seventeen hundred and thirteen, while others would place that event eight or nine years later;—the truth lies between these two conjectures.

At the age of ten or twelve he came to this country with his father, a respectable farmer, who brought with him a numerous offspring to find a home in the new world. The fa-

mily adopted a residence on the west side of the Susquehannah, where the father, after seeing his surviving children well provided for, breathed his last in the year 1761, leaving a well deserved reputation for benevolence and honesty.

James Smith, the subject of our present notice, was the second son, and was placed for education under the immediate care of the celebrated Dr. Allison, provost of the college at Philadelphia, by whose instructions he so far profited as to acquire a respectable knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, and a taste for classical allusion that endured to the termination of his life.

He also became skilful in surveying, an art of peculiar usefulness and dignity at that early period, when enterprise and capital were so generally directed to the purchase of lands, and when no man without some proficiency in the use of the compass and chain, could ascertain his own or his neighbour's boundaries.

With these preparatory acquirements he applied himself to the study of the law, either in the office of Thomas Cookson, or of his elder brother, who had become a practising lawyer in the town of Lancaster, but died in early manhood, when James had scarcely completed his pupillage.

It is believed that he did not attempt to practise his profession at Lancaster; but immediately after his brother's death removed far into the woods, and established himself, in the blended character of a lawyer and surveyor in the vicinity of the present site of Shippensburg. The propensity to buy wild lands as a matter of speculation, and the inaccurate surveys frequently made for distant purchasers, had already begun to operate as the sources of abundant litigation in Pennsylvania, and supplied Mr. Smith with very active occupation at this early period, as they continued to do until he final-

ly relinquished the profession, after an industrious and able exercise of it during nearly sixty years.

After a few years passed in this remote situation, he took up his abode in the flourishing village of York, where he continued to reside all the rest of his life; and he practised his profession there with great credit and profit; and under circumstances peculiarly favourable to tranquillity and comfort, for he was, during many years, the only lawyer at the place.

It was in this prosperous condition of his fortunes he married Miss Eleanor Armor, of New Castle; and he continued to be the sole practitioner of the law residing at York, although Jasper Yeates, afterwards the distinguished judge of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and other young men, attended the courts there, as Mr. Smith did those of the neighbouring counties.

In the year 1769, Mr. Hartley, afterwards a colonel in the revolutionary army, made the second lawyer at York; but Mr. Smith retained his position at the head of the bar, and continued a career of uninterrupted professional assiduity and success, up to the commencement of the war.

During this period of his life, he was quite as much distinguished for his powers of entertainment, his drollery, his humorous stories, and his love of conviviality, as for his talents and success in the practice of the law.

His memory was remarkably retentive of anecdotes, and his perception of the ridiculous quick and unerring. With these powers, a well regulated temper and great benevolence, it is not to be wondered at that he should have been the delight of the social circle, should have inclined to the company of younger persons, and should frequently have set the court house as well as the tavern bar room in a roar of laughter.

Yet though he loved wine, and drank much of it, he was never known to be intoxicated; and though he was often the cause of most obstreperous mirth, he always maintained the dignity of his own character.

It is to be remembered, to his honour, that even in the midst of his most extravagant sallies, he never uttered, nor permitted in his presence, a jest which was aimed at religion or its ministers. He was indeed a communicant, and regularly attended the church in the morning of every Sabbath; but could with difficulty be persuaded to go in the afternoon, being accustomed to say, in a manner which is described as irresistibly comic, that a second sermon in the same day always put the first one entirely out of his head. Few of his witticisms have been remembered; indeed their effect seems to have depended entirely on the manner and accompanying circumstances. A gentleman who passed a part of the year 1773, in York, thus describes his peculiar humour: "The most trivial incident from his mouth was stamped with his originality; and in relating one evening how he had been disturbed in his office by a cow, he gave inconceivable zest to his narration, by his manner of telling how she thrust her nose into the door and there *roared like a Numidian lion.* With a sufficiency of various reading to furnish him with materials for ridiculous allusions and incongruous combinations, he was never so successful as when he could find a learned pedant to play upon; and judge Stedman, when mellow, was best calculated for his butt: the judge was a Scotchman, a man of reading and erudition, though extremely magisterial and dogmatical in his cups. This it was which gave point to the humour of Smith, who, as if desirous of coming in for his share of the glory, while Stedman was in full display of his historical knowledge, never failed to set him raving by some monstrous anachronism; such, for instance, as, "Don't you

remember, Mr. Stedman, that terrible bloody battle which Alexander the Great fought with the Russians near the straits of Babelmandel?" "What, sir!" said Stedman, repeating with ineffable contempt, "which Alexander the Great fought with the Russians! where, mon, did you get your chronology?" "I think you will find it recorded, Mr. Stedman, in Thucydides or Herodotus." On another occasion, being asked for his authority for some enormous assertion, in which both space and time were fairly annihilated, with unshaken gravity he replied, "I am pretty sure I have seen an account of it, Mr. Stedman, in a High Dutch almanack, printed at *Aleepo*," his drawling way of pronouncing Aleppo. While every one at table was holding his sides at the expense of the judge, he on his part had no doubt that Smith was the object of the laughter, as he was of his own unutterable disdain."

But a time was approaching when distinction was to be acquired, and eminence maintained, by the exercise of other talents than those which were fitted to enliven a convivial party. The clouds of war already lowered on the horizon; and every prominent man was obliged to take his part in the momentous struggle.

When in the spring of the year 1774, intelligence was received of the enactment of the bill closing the port of Boston, the disputes between the colonies and the mother country began to be seen and understood in their true light, as irreconcilable without concessions not likely to be made on either side, and tending manifestly to a desperate and bloody contest.

The prophetic forebodings of Josiah Quincy, uttered on a preceding occasion, had rung through the land like the sound of an alarm bell. "We must be grossly ignorant," this eloquent patriot had said, "of the importance and value of the prize for which we contend; we must be equally ignorant of

the power of those who have combined against us; we must be blind to that malice, inveteracy, and insatiable revenge, which actuate our enemies, public and private, abroad and in our bosom, to hope that we shall end this controversy without the sharpest, sharpest conflicts, . . . to flatter ourselves that popular resolves, popular harangues, popular acclamations, and popular vapour will vanquish our foes. Let us consider the issue. Let us look to the end. Let us weigh and consider before we advance to those measures which must bring on the most trying and terrible struggle this country ever saw."

These words had been repeated widely through the colonies, and to all reflecting minds the same thoughts were now suggested by this vindictive act of parliament. The example of Virginia was generally followed, and the first day of June, when the bill was to go into operation, was devoted, not to a mere heartless observance of a prescribed solemnity, but, in sincerity and sober apprehension, to a serious cultivation of religious and patriotic resolutions.

Mr. Smith was now at an age when the liability to be carried away by thoughtless ardour and enthusiasm was past. Between fifty and sixty years old, he might well have pleaded his fulness of days as an excuse for avoiding all active participation in the contest. In the successful practice of the legal profession, possessed of considerable property, and engaged in extensive iron-works on the Codorus creek, he had nothing to gain by devoting himself to public employments, and every thing to lose if the efforts of the resisting, though not yet rebellious, colonists should be defeated.

But the calls of patriotism prevailed with him, over the dictates of prudence or selfishness; he did "look to the end," he "weighed and considered," and having taken his part on the side of liberty and his country, he gave himself up to the most active exertions in the cause.

Two measures of defence and protection had been suggested and recommended by various public meetings in Boston and elsewhere, and now occupied much attention; these were an agreement to abstain from importing any goods from England, a plan evidently very difficult of complete execution; and the assembling of a general congress for the purpose of deliberating upon some common scheme of action to be recommended to the colonies.

In Pennsylvania there was a meeting of delegates from all the counties with a view to collect and express the public sentiment on these subjects, and on the condition of public affairs generally, in the form of instructions to the general assembly. This meeting, called the "Committee for the province of Pennsylvania," was composed entirely of men of great distinction in the colony, and among them James Smith took his seat as one of three delegates from the county of York, and was appointed one of the committee to prepare and bring in a draught of instructions.

The instructions reported and adopted comprised an elaborate and very able argument upon the constitutional powers of parliament, ascribed to Mr. Dickenson; which was, however, separated from the instructions and afterwards published as an "essay," accompanied with learned notes, displaying remarkable research and erudition.

The resolutions passed at this meeting of delegates representing the qualified voters of all the counties in Pennsylvania, as well as the language held by them to the general assembly whom they were to counsel and instruct, exhibit the same remarkable union, apparent in most of the public proceedings at this period, of honest unshaken attachment to the king and to the people of England, with the clearest understanding of their constitutional rights and the most established determination to preserve them at every hazard. When had king such

subjects? When was faithful loyalty so discouraged? "Our judgments," they declared, "and affections attach us with inviolable loyalty to his majesty's person, family and government;" and further they resolved that an unconstitutional independence on the parent state was utterly abhorrent to their principles. But they declared also in reference to the power claimed by parliament, "of right to bind the people of these colonies in all cases whatsoever," that the wit of man could not possibly form a more clear, concise and comprehensive definition and sentence of slavery than those expressions contain.

The instructions to the general assembly recommend the appointment of a proper number of persons to attend a congress of deputies from the several colonies, and as to the non-importation agreement they object that it would be injurious to great numbers of their fellow subjects at *home*, for whom they had been taught to entertain tender and brotherly affections, and that it would be disrespectful towards his majesty's government. They request, however, that if congress should determine on such a measure, the deputies to be appointed by the assembly, might be told to cause it to be permanent and binding upon all; and they desire that persons should be appointed and sent *home* with a representation of the grievances of the colonies.

As the whole tenor of the "instructions" is pacific and conciliatory, there is no mention of armed resistance, except in the hint that if Britain shall continue to persevere in her pretensions, "either the colonists will sink from the rank of freemen into the class of slaves, or if they have strength and virtue enough to exert themselves in striving to avoid this perdition, they must be involved in an *opposition dreadful even in contemplation*."

It may be inferred that Mr. Smith was either less disposed than a majority of the committee to entertain "tender and brotherly affection" for his fellow subjects in England, and less reluctant to adopt a measure implying "disrespect to his majesty's government," or that he had a more distinct anticipation of a resort to the logic of the bayonet than the committee were willing to avow; since he employed himself on his return to York in raising and drilling a volunteer company, of which he was elected the captain.

This was the first corps of volunteer soldiers organized in Pennsylvania, with a view to oppose the armies of Great Britain, and Mr. Smith was entitled to great praise for this practical and efficient exercise of patriotism, by which at a very early period of the contest, indeed several months before the first shedding of blood at Lexington, he set an example of so salutary a character.

Neither his age nor his previous studies or habits fitted him particularly for military life; his object was gained when he saw corps after corps organized in emulation of his own, until the volunteer force of Pennsylvannia became effective and respectable. When his company had increased to a regiment he accepted the honorary title of their colonel, leaving to younger men the duty and honour of the actual command.

While Mr. Smith was thus occupied at home, the first congress was held at Philadelphia; and the eloquent remonstrances which they addressed to the people and the king of Great Britain, if ineffectual as to their professed object, were yet most affecting and powerful appeals to the hearts of the Americans; and if they did not serve to weaken the general attachment to the royal government and British nation, they at least confirmed the general resolution to sacrifice all selfish considerations and maintain their rights even at the price of war.

It was in this improved tone of public feeling that the "convention for the province of Pennsylvania" met, in January, 1775.

Of this convention Mr. Smith was a member, and joined in the resolutions approving of the conduct of the continental congress, and promising to aid in carrying into effect the non-importation agreement entered into and recommended by that body. He also concurred in the spirited declaration that "if the British administration should determine by force to effect a submission to the late arbitrary acts of the British parliament, in such a situation we hold it our indispensable duty to resist such force, and at every hazard to defend the rights and liberties of America."

It may be remarked too, as an indication of some change in the prevailing sentiment, that there is not in these resolutions any profession of attachment to the king or royal family.

The design to break off all political connexion with Great Britain had not, however, yet been avowed in any public proceeding, and was not, by any means, generally entertained. But it could not but be present to the minds of all men as a possible contingency, and much more was meant than met the ear in the moderate and guarded language of congress and other public bodies, when a determination to defend and maintain American liberty was distinctly declared.

While the long cherished sentiments of affection towards the king and respect for the royal government were daily weakened by fresh proofs of a determined spirit of tyranny on the part of the British rulers; efforts were made on the other hand to discountenance the proceedings of congress, and to prevent the sober minded people of Pennsylvania from being carried away by the contagious enthusiasm for liberty.

At the very time that the convention at Philadelphia were recommending the resistance of force by force, another assembly held in the same town and possessing perhaps equal influence, was engaged in the endeavour to counteract their schemes.

A meeting of the people called Quakers residing in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, held by delegates regularly appointed to represent them, formed this anti-revolutionary congress, which met in the month of January, 1775; and the Testimony or Address which they published called upon all the members of that powerful and numerous society, in the two colonies, to unite in abhorrence of all such writings and measures as evidenced a desire or design to break off the happy connexion of the colonies with the mother country, or to interrupt their just subordination to the king.

It is impossible to say what effect this effort and others made at the same time, to damp the patriotic spirit of the colonies, might have had on the deliberations of the new congress, which assembled in May of the same year, if the sword had not in the mean time been actually drawn, and the bloody affair at Lexington had not occurred just in season to rouse the indignation of even the peaceful Pennsylvanians, and loyal inhabitants of New-York, and commit the colonies irretrievably to the prosecution of hostilities.

The Quaker Testimony certainly had no effect on Mr. Smith; he was rising at this time in the military line and had attained to the dignity of colonel, but was not chosen a member of the congress, the appointments for which had been made before the skirmish at Lexington had given so decided and warlike a character to the dispute.

Indeed, colonel Smith was at this time an *ultra* in whiggism; republicanism had not then begun to be avowed. He was half a year at least in advance of the greater part of his

"fellow-subjects" of Pennsylvania, and not at all the sort of man the general assembly were disposed to entrust with the important and delicate task of "establishing that union and harmony between Great Britain and the colonies, which is indispensably necessary to the welfare and happiness of both."

Such were the expressed objects of the assembly in appointing deputies to represent the colony in congress; objects, the successful pursuit of which seemed to require the exertions of the most moderate among the whigs, aided perhaps by the counsels of the most intelligent among the tories.

Such a selection, therefore, was made when the deputies to this congress were to be appointed, that it happened in the following year to be extremely difficult to obtain the vote of this colony in favour of independence; and it became necessary for the influential patriots to exert their energies with unceasing effort, in order to bring the force of public opinion to bear upon the general assembly, so as to stimulate that too pacific body, as well as some of their representatives in the continental congress, into a course conformable to the desires of the friends of liberty.

Notwithstanding the spirited measures adopted by the congress during the summer, in the organization of a continental army, and the appointment of Washington to the command of all the continental forces, "raised or to be raised, for the defence of American liberty;" and notwithstanding too the excitement produced by the recent tragedy at Lexington, the battle of Bunker's hill, the destruction of Falmouth, the capture of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and the brilliant career of Montgomery in Canada, still a final separation from Great Britain was by no means generally looked to as an inevitable or desirable termination of the contest.

Affairs were manifestly tending to a crisis, which could only leave unconditional submission as the alternative of independence. yet the word that was in every one's mind seemed too portentous to be openly expressed ; and in the province of Pennsylvania, the state of the public mind on this subject might have remained longer a matter of conjecture, if the opponents of separation had not chosen to bring it to a decisive test.

In November, 1775, the general assembly made a re-appointment of their delegates, with the addition of three new members; instructing them, however, that "though the oppressive measures of the British parliament and administration have compelled us to resist their violence by force of arms ; yet we strictly enjoin you, that you, in behalf of this colony, dissent from and utterly reject any proposition, should such be made, that may cause or lead to a separation from our mother country, or a change of this form of government."

This decided stand against independence, assumed by so respectable an assembly, roused its friends to immediate and active exertions; and among them, colonel Smith was not the least zealous and efficient. The general assembly was assailed with petitions and remonstrances, calling for a revocation of their instructions, which were denounced as contrary to the wishes of the people, and calculated to separate Pennsylvania from the other colonies. These applications were entirely unavailing; and the assembly—encouraged, perhaps, by the conduct of the Maryland convention, who declared early in December, that they were not and never had been desirous of independence—refused positively to rescind the instructions.

It was plain that if this example were generally adopted by the colonies, and the delegates in congress should act in

obedience to these views, the contest must become at once hopeless, and entire submission to the British power must speedily follow.

The advocates of independence in Pennsylvania had now an arduous task to perform, but they persevered against every discouragement. Early in the year 1776, the Quaker Testimony was renewed against the war, and the assembly of South Carolina declared, in an address to governor Rutledge, that they still desired an accommodation with the royal government.

The attitudes thus assumed by the colonies of South Carolina, Maryland and Pennsylvania, were extremely disheartening to the friends of liberty; but colonel Smith and the patriots with whom he acted, very soon had the satisfaction to learn that North Carolina had expressly empowered her delegates to concur in a declaration of independence, and that Massachusetts had resolved that the inhabitants of that colony would support with their lives and fortunes such a measure if congress should think fit to adopt it.

Accordingly congress did on the fifteenth of May, adopt a resolution which was in spirit, though not in terms, a declaration of independence. Previous to this time all the public acts of that body had recognized the king as entitled to entire respect and loyalty, but directed their complaints and menaces solely against the ministry and the parliament. But now, for the first time, war was openly declared against the king, and all ideas of reconciliation were publicly disclaimed.

This important resolution, after reciting the acts of tyranny committed and meditated by "his Britannic majesty," declares that it appeared "absolutely irreconcilable to reason and good conscience, for the people of these colonies now to take the oaths and affirmations necessary for the support of

any government *under the crown of Great Britain;* and it is necessary that the exercise of every kind of authority under the said crown should be totally suppressed, and all power of government exerted under the *power of the people of these colonies,*" &c.

The resolution concludes with a recommendation to the several colonies to "adopt such governments as shall in the opinion of the representatives of the people best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular and America in general."

This decisive measure removed the difficulties which had embarrassed the course of the whigs in Pennsylvania. The government of the colony being in the hands of the General Assembly, they had been left with no other resource than to excite such a universal enthusiasm in favour of liberty as might induce the assembly to change their vote, and in the mean time they had the mortification to see the conventions of North Carolina and Massachusetts outstripping, in the race of patriotism and courage, the very colony within whose limits the congress was sitting, and that colony indeed not only backward in the cause, but pledged by her constituted authorities against emancipation.

But a way was now opened for them to proceed unshackled by such pledge,—an opportunity was given for creating a power paramount to the general assembly, competent to supersede its acts, and to place Pennsylvania in the attitude which it behoved her to assume.

Accordingly, only five days after, a large meeting of the citizens of Philadelphia was held in front of the very building in which congress was deliberating on plans of resistance: the resolution of the fifteenth of May was read and approved by hearty acclamations; the instructions of the general assembly to the delegates in congress were also read and as

loudly condemned, and it was resolved to invite a provincial conference to meet with as little delay as was possible, for the purpose of making arrangements for establishing a new government in Pennsylvania.

Of this conference of committees, which assembled at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia, on the eighteenth of June, colonel Smith was an active and distinguished member.

It is observable, that so much had the military spirit extended itself by this time, that of the ninety-six members, generally men of professional or agricultural pursuits, more than half bore the title of colonel, major, or captain.

The meeting was in fact composed entirely of decided whigs, and their proceedings were entirely harmonious; but a part of the necessity of their assembling had been obviated; the general assembly had given way to the force of public sentiment, and a few days before the meeting of the conference, had rescinded their obnoxious instructions. This vote was equivalent to an instruction or request that the delegates would vote for independence, and seems so to have been considered by the conference, who, in consequence, did not take any further step in that particular matter. The determination had indeed now become universal to adopt the measure when it should be proposed: the resolution of congress disclaiming the authority of the king had in effect left little more than a formality to be performed, in an actual declaration or manifesto; and the colony of Virginia had put an end to the possibility of much further doubt on the subject, by instructing her delegates to propose and advocate such a declaration.

The resolution in favour of issuing a declaration of independence had been introduced in congress by Mr. Lee, of Virginia, on the seventh of June; it encountered more serious opposition than had been anticipated. The objections urged

were not applied to the principle of the measure itself, but to its expediency just at that time; many of the members who were fully determined that such a declaration should be issued at a proper season, were still of opinion that greater preparations for war should first be made, as the immediate effect would be to stimulate the British government to more strenuous hostility.

Nor was this prudence confined to the members of congress; the Maryland convention had, by a very recent vote, on the fifteenth of May, adhered to their resolution of the preceding December, against a separation from Great Britain; and the provincial congress of New York had returned a very cold and discouraging answer to an address of a committee of mechanics that had ventured to suggest the propriety of instructing the New York members to vote for independence.

In this state of things it was thought necessary for the conference to add the weight of their influence, and on the afternoon of Sunday, the twenty-third day of June, (for Sunday shone no Sabbath day to these indefatigable patriots,) a young man distinguished for his talents and his zeal in the cause of freedom, and who subsequently became one of the most distinguished ornaments of the American nation, proposed the appointment of a committee to draught a resolution "declaring the sense of the conference with respect to an independence of this province from the crown and parliament of Great Britain."

The mover of this resolution was Dr. Benjamin Rush, and it was seconded by colonel Smith, who were appointed, with the chairman, Thomas M'Kean, to compose the committee.

The next morning the committee met and prepared a declaration which was reported in the afternoon, read a first and second time by special order, unanimously approved,

signed by all the members, and ordered to be presented to congress the following day.

This spirited paper recites that George the third, in violation of the British constitution, and of the laws of justice and humanity, had, by an accumulation of oppression unparalleled in history, excluded the inhabitants of this, with the other American colonies, from his protection; had paid no regard to "any of our numerous petitions for a redress of our complicated grievances, but hath lately purchased foreign troops to assist in enslaving us; and hath excited the savages of this country to carry on a war against us, as also the negroes to imbue their hands in the blood of their masters in a manner unpractised by civilized nations; and hath lately insulted our calamities by declaring that he will show us no mercy till he has reduced us. And whereas the obligations of allegiance (being reciprocal between a king and his subjects) are now dissolved on the side of the colonists, by the despotism of the said king, insomuch that it now appears that loyalty to him is treason against the good people of this country; and whereas not only the parliament, but there is reason to believe, too many of the people of Great Britian have concurred in the arbitrary and unjust proceedings against us, and whereas the public virtue of this colony (so essential to its liberty and happiness) must be endangered by a future political union with, or dependence on, a crown and nation so lost to justice, patriotism and magnanimity." Therefore, the resolution proceeded to assert that "the deputies of Pennsylvania assembled in the conference unanimously declare their willingness to concur in a vote of the congress declaring the united colonies free and independent states: and that they call upon the nations of Europe, and appeal to the great Arbiter and Governor of the empires of the world

to witness that this declaration did not originate in ambition, or in an impatience of lawful authority, but that they are driven to it in obedience to the first principles of nature, by the oppressions and cruelties of the aforesaid king and parliament of Great Britain, as the only possible measure left to preserve and establish our liberties and to transmit them inviolate to posterity."

This paper, although prepared in extreme haste, the appointment of the committee being on Sunday afternoon, and the report being made the very next day, comprises nevertheless, nearly all the topics which are touched with more polished phraseology in the declaration adopted by congress on the fourth of July ensuing, of which the Pennsylvania resolution may be considered as the rough draught.

The very same day that this eloquent and manly resolution was reported and adopted, another and not less important task, of a similar kind, was devolved on colonel Smith, and his young friend Dr. Rush.

The congress had passed a vote recommending the formation of an army of four thousand five hundred men, of the Pennsylvania militia for the protection of Philadelphia, but the general assembly had suddenly and unexpectedly broken up, finding their functions likely to be very shortly taken out of their hands, without having made any provision for carrying the plan into effect.

It became necessary, therefore, for the conference, as the only body of men that could be considered as representing the people, to appeal to the patriotic ardour of the volunteers, or "associators," as they were then styled, and to induce them to organize the camp without any other requisition than this informal call of their country.

For this duty colonel Smith, Dr. Rush, and colonel Bayard were selected, and the day following their appointment they

reported the "address to the associators" which was adopted. The paper thus prepared was of course intended for publication, and it is remarkable that the committee at this time, more than a week before the vote was taken in congress, chose to consider the question of independence as decided, and all possibility of reconciliation with the royal government as entirely at an end.

"We need not remind you," such is the language addressed to the volunteers, "that you are now furnished with new motives to animate and support your courage. You are not about to contend against the power of Great Britain in order to displace one set of villains to make room for another. Your arms will not be enervated in the day of battle with the reflection that you are to risk your lives or shed your blood for a British tyrant, or that your posterity will have your work to do over again: You are about to contend for permanent freedom, to be supported by a government which will be derived from yourselves, and which will have for its object not the emolument of one man, or class of men only, but the safety, liberty and happiness of every individual in the community. We call upon you, therefore, by the respect and obedience which are due to the authority of the United Colonies, to concur in this important measure. The present campaign will probably decide the fate of America. It is now in your power to immortalize your names by mingling your achievements with the events of the year 1776, a year which we hope will be famed in the annals of history to the end of time, for establishing on a lasting foundation the liberties of one quarter of the globe. Remember the honour of our colony is at stake. Should you desert the common cause at the present juncture, the glory you have acquired by your former exertions of strength and virtue will be tarnished, and our friends and brethren who are now acquiring laurels in the

most remote parts of America will reproach us, and blush to own themselves natives or inhabitants of Pennsylvania. But there are other motives before you; your houses, your fields, the legacies of your ancestors, or the dear bought fruits of your own industry, and your liberty, now urge you to the field. These cannot plead with you in vain, or we might point out to you further, your wives, your children, your aged fathers and mothers, who now look up to you for aid, and hope for salvation in this day of calamity, only from the instrumentality of your swords."

The number of "associators" in Pennsylvania was very large—according to the estimate of Mr. Penn, in his examination before the house of lords, they amounted to a volunteer force of twenty thousand men.

This calculation is, however, to be taken with such allowance as will preclude the idea of that number of soldiers actually organized and equipped. The arms were deficient in quality and amount, the battalions were scattered throughout the colony, the whole operations of agriculture and the mechanic arts, besides professional avocations, must have been interrupted if the associators had been mustered and marched to battle.

The spirit that was excited and kept alive by the system of enrolling so large a portion of the effective force of the province in the list of volunteers, contributed nevertheless, and in a very considerable degree, to place Pennsylvania on the side of independence, and to keep her firm in the cause after her territory had become the theatre of war, and her capital had fallen into the hands of the enemy.

To the creation of this invaluable spirit, which filled the province with citizen-soldiers, colonel Smith had been, as we have seen, mainly instrumental, by offering the earliest example of the formation of volunteer companies; and he now

had the satisfaction to witness the beneficial consequences of his efforts.

After the adjournment of the conference, in the last week of June, he returned to York, and had a short interval of time to devote to his clients and his iron works, both of which had been necessarily neglected while his attention was occupied by public affairs.

It was, however, a period during which no man that had taken so active an interest in the great contest, could be much at ease, or very capable of attention to private concerns.

The declaration of independence was known to have been proposed in congress, and to be under discussion there until the second day of July, when the vote was taken, and the measure adopted.

This event, although so momentous in its character and consequences, was received with remarkable coolness in the city of Philadelphia; it in fact excited no surprise. The colonies of North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, had already, by public acts, expressed their determination on the subject; and the question was known to be merely one of now or hereafter—of accelerating or delaying—the Rubicon was reached, and with more or less hesitancy was certainly to be passed.

The Philadelphia newspapers of third of July, merely announced, in a part of their pages that is by no means conspicuous, that "yesterday the continental congress declared the United Colonies free and independent states."

This simple annunciation, unaccompanied with comment, applause or preface, of one of the most memorable transactions in the history of man, is to be found in all the newspapers printed at the very place of its occurrence, and is a curious characteristic of the cool and imperturbable temper

that prevailed among the whigs throughout the whole of the revolutionary war.

In York county, the intelligence of this event, and the declaration itself, which followed in two days after, were received just in time to give additional interest, but more complete unanimity to their election of members of the convention, which was to assemble on the fifteenth, for the purpose of preparing a constitution and plan of government for Pennsylvania.

It was now a season for the timorous, and for those who loved their ease and valued their personal safety, to seek excuses for staying at home, and leaving the peril and the labour of public life to such as cared more for their country and her freedom, and less for their own private property and lives.

The army of general Clinton, which had successively menaced New York, Virginia and North Carolina, had now made an intelligible demonstration of an intended attack on Charleston, while sir William Howe had brought a very large army to Staten Island.

The war began now to look extremely serious; that "sharpest, sharpest conflict," predicted by Josiah Quincy, was now impending, and no one could tell how soon his own fields and threshold might become the scene of the carnage of his own relatives and friends.

The intelligence from England was also extremely discouraging; the ministry had carried their headlong zeal so far as to be guilty of the absurd extravagance of furnishing general Gage's army at Boston with live cattle, hay, and even firewood from England, rather than risk their being cut off by the rebels from the acquisition of these bulky but necessary supplies. The ministerial majorities in both houses of parliament had not diminished, notwithstanding the uncon-

stitutional project of hiring foreign troops had been avowed, and the contracts with the German princes were actually made. The eloquent addresses of congress to the king and the people had met with a cold reception, and every thing bespoke a resolute and severe determination to exert the whole power of Britain, in a mighty effort to reduce the refractory colonies to subjection.

Colonel Smith was not deterred by these formidable considerations from pursuing the course into which his patriotism had impelled him. Nor was he induced by the pressing claims of his private affairs, to withdraw his services from his country; although his practice could not but suffer by his continued absence, and his iron works had become in his absence a very unprofitable business.

He was, however, elected a member of the convention, and did not decline serving, but attended at the meeting in Philadelphia on the fifteenth day of July.

This convention was assembled for the expressed purpose of forming a new constitution for Pennsylvania, now no longer a colony or a province, but become an independent state; it is a circumstance, however, curiously characteristic of the practical and business-like habits of the public bodies of that period, that the first resolution adopted by them, after choosing Dr. Franklin for their president, was an earnest recommendation to the committee of safety that they should take immediate measures for procuring all the lead used in spouts, clock weights, ornaments of houses, or other form, and turning it into bullets without delay.

The first important committee that they appointed, was "to make an essay for a declaration of rights for this state;" —colonel Smith was chosen a member: and before the committee had time to perform the difficult duties of their appointment, other and not less important responsibilities were

devolved on him. On the twentieth of July, the convention proceeded to ballot for nine members of congress, and colonel Smith was one of the nine elected; but he did not on that account abandon his seat in the convention, nor cease to take an active participation in its deliberations. On the twenty-third, he was appointed a member of the committee charged with the delicate task of preparing an ordinance, declaring what should be high treason and misprision of treason against the state, and what punishments ought to be inflicted for these offences; and also an ordinance declaring the punishment for counterfeiting paper bills of credit issued by congress, or by the late assembly of Pennsylvania, or any other of the states, and how far such bills of credit ought to be a legal tender.

The very next day this committee reported on all these subjects. The proposed ordinance respecting treason, which was adopted by the convention, is remarkable for the mildness of its penal inflictions. At this period of civil war and bloodshed, the committee recoiled from the idea of capital punishment, even for that crime which in most ages and countries has been visited—as it is even now in some of the most civilized nations—not only with loss of life, but with death aggravated by circumstances of torture to the sufferer, or insult to his remains, and total, unsparing ruin to his family.

It deserves to be recorded in honour of colonel Smith and his associates in that committee, that they had the wise humanity to propose, and the convention to approve, a scheme of penal law on this subject distinguished by its mildness and mercy.

Treason, which was to consist in levying war against the state or adhering to its enemies or the enemies of the United States, was to be punished by forfeiture of goods and estate,

and imprisonment for a term not to exceed the duration of the war with Great Britain.

Misprision of treason was to cause only a forfeiture of one third part of the offender's property, and a similar imprisonment. But it was also magnanimously and humanely enacted, that in case of a conviction for treason the court should possess a discretionary power to apply any part, or the whole, of the forfeited property to the support of the offender's wife and children. The benign wisdom of this provision cannnot be too highly praised, and cannot fail to excite particular admiration when the period of its enactment, in the midst of the exasperation of civil war, is considered.

As to the crime of counterfeiting the bills of credit to be issued by congress or any one of the states, the committee did not deem any such lenity expedient. Misguided men might join the enemy through an obstinate perseverance in old attachments to the king and nation, which all the colonists had so recently looked upon as legitimate objects of loyalty and regard—and yet no absolute depravity of the moral sense be shown by such conduct. To be a tory, and actively so, indicated a want of patriotism, a defect of understanding and correct principle, but did not necessarily imply a total baseness of heart; but a man that would commit a forgery must be wholly abandoned to crime, and could not plead ignorance or prejudice in mitigation of his villany. The whole community is, also, deeply interested, at all times, in protecting the circulating medium, whether it be metallic or paper, from extensive forgeries; the policy of the British government is well known to be unbending on this subject, and the utmost severity and certainty of punishment has always in that country awaited offences against the current coin and government securities.

The necessity of this severity is its justification; but another part of the report of this committee may be considered as more equivocal in the prudence or propriety of its suggestions. It was proposed to declare the bills of credit issued by congress or the state of Pennsylvania, a legal tender in all cases whatsoever.

The modern doctrines of political economy and political justice would condemn this measure without qualification. The circumstances of the period were, however, peculiar, and excuse, if they do not justify, such a provision.

It is not necessary here to enter into an examination of the arguments in support or those in reprobation of this act of legislation, it is enough to say that colonel Smith exerted himself both in the committee and in the convention to procure its adoption.

A resolution that was adopted about this time may be mentioned both as indicative of the simplicity and real devotion to business which marked the whole proceedings of the convention, and as affording an example that at the present day might perhaps be advantageously adopted in many dignified deliberative assemblies. This was the imposition of a fine of seven shillings and six pence for absence from the house half an hour after the hour of meeting, or for leaving the house without permission; and an additional fine of ten shillings on each absent member when a quorum did not attend.

On the ninth of August we find colonel Smith appointed one of a new committee to report an ordinance for appointing "conservators of the peace," in various counties; a new name for "justices of the peace," and perhaps more appropriate; but the attempt thus to introduce a novel title for a kind of magistrates whose functions were well understood under their ancient designation, did not succeed, the inclination being very general to make no more alteration in the

fashions of administering the law than the great political change that had just occurred rendered indispensable.

A few days after this the "Declaration of Rights" was submitted by the committee to the convention; a paper remarkable for setting forth the doctrines of republicanism which had been only hinted in the declaration of independence.

"That the people of this state have the sole, exclusive and inherent right of governing and regulating the internal police of the same.

"That all power being originally inherent in, and consequently derived from the people, therefore all officers of government, whether legislative or executive, are their trustees and servants, and at all times accountable to them.

"That government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection and security of the people, nation, or community, and not for the particular emolument or advantage of any single man, family, or set of men, who are a part only of that community; and that the community hath an indubitable, unalienable, and indispensable right to reform, alter, or abolish government in such manner as shall be by that community judged most conducive to the public weal.

"That all elections ought to be free, and that all freemen having a sufficient evident common interest with, and attachment to the community, have a right to elect officers, or be elected into office."

These are among the truly republican doctrines asserted in this declaration; and thus early was universal suffrage proclaimed as a fundamental principle of Pennsylvanian policy.

The frame of government which accompanied the declaration of rights, and was adopted with it, did not receive the unqualified approbation of colonel Smith, but as an experiment, it could do no harm, and the people were at all times

competent to change it. He therefore concurred in the vote which established the constitution marked by the peculiarity of a legislative body not divided into two houses, and an executive power to be held by a council, the head of which was merely nominal : the inconveniences of which plan were found so considerable after a trial of several years, as to induce a change and the passing to an opposite extreme, investing the whole executive power in one magistrate with less check or control upon his functions than has been thought expedient in any other state of the union.

After a laborious session of six weeks the convention dissolved itself, having enacted several very important ordinances, besides preparing the new form of government and giving constant attention to the part which Pennsylvania could contribute towards carrying on the war.

Colonel Smith was now obliged to take his seat in the national council ; a hurried visit to his home was scarcely permitted to him by the pressure of his public duties.

The convention, in electing new delegates in place of those who had voted against the declaration of independence, and re-electing the others, had given instructions touching the course of conduct that they expected to be pursued by their members in future; these instructions were comprised in a resolution of the convention, and may be considered as the commission granted to colonel Smith and his associated delegates ; and were as follows :

"This convention, confiding in your wisdom and virtue, has, by the authority of the people, chosen and appointed you to represent the free state of Pennsylvania in the congress of the United States of America, and authorized you, or a majority of such of you as shall at any time be present, to vote for, and in the name of this state, in all and every question there to be decided; and this convention apprehend it

to be a duty which they owe to the public, to give you the following general directions for your conduct, confident that you will at all times pay the utmost attention to the instructions of your constituents.

"The immense and irreparable injury which a free country may sustain by, and the great inconveniences which always arise from a delay of its councils, induce us, in the first place, strictly to enjoin and require you to give not only a constant, but a punctual attendance in congress.

"The present necessity of a vigorous exertion of the united force of the free states of America, against our British enemies, is the most important object of your immediate regard, and points out the necessity of cultivating and strengthening, by every means in your power, the present happy union of these states, until such a just, equal and perpetual confederation can be agreed upon, and finally effected, as will be most likely to secure to each the perfect direction of its own internal police: In the forming of which confederation, you are to give your utmost assistance.

"We recommend to you to use your utmost power and influence in congress, to have a due attention paid to the establishing a respectable naval force; as such a force is absolutely necessary to every trading nation, and is the least expensive or dangerous to the liberties of mankind.

"With respect to the forming of treaties with foreign powers, it is necessary only to say, that we strictly charge and enjoin you, not to agree to or enter into any treaty of commerce or alliance with Great Britain, or any other foreign power, but (on the part of America) as free and independent states: And, that whenever Great Britain shall acknowledge these states free and independent, you are hereby authorized, in conjunction with the delegates of the other

United States, to treat with her concerning peace, amity and commerce, on just and equal terms."

In the beginning of October, and with these instructions for his public conduct, and a patriotic spirit that required no prompting or encouragement, he commenced his regular and punctual attendance in congress.

It was a season of anxiety, alarm, and agitation, followed by very general gloom and despondency.

The two armies had confronted each other at White Plains, and expectation of a sanguinary battle became universal: general Howe had changed his plan of operations, and threatened the Jerseys with invasion.

Fort Washington was lost, and with it two thousand of the best soldiers belonging to the American army; the militia were dispersing, general Washington's force was diminishing by daily desertions, and the efforts to rouse the Pennsylvania and Maryland militia had not been successful.

Colonel Smith did not, however, lose the accustomed elasticity of his spirits: the following good-humoured note to his wife, written about the middle of October, 1776, if other proof were wanting, would show a playfulness of temper not consistent with gloom or despondency.

"If Mr. Wilson," he says, "should come through York, give him a flogging, he should have been here a week ago. I expect, however, to be home before election, my three months are nearly up. Genl. left this on Thursday—I wrote to you by colonel Kenedy.

"This morning I put on the red jacket under my shirt. Yesterday I dined at Mr. Morris's and got wet going home, and my shoulder got troublesome, but by running a hot smoothing iron over it three times, it got better; this is a new and cheap cure. My respects to all friends and neighbours, my love to the children."

Mr. Wilson did come, probably without the punishment that Mrs. Smith was thus directed to inflict, but colonel Smith did not on that account consider himself entitled to leave his post at this crisis. On the twenty-third of November, he was appointed, with Mr. Wilson, Mr. Chase, Mr. Clymer, and Mr. Stockton, a sort of executive committee, who were charged with full powers to carry on the whole business of the war, that is to say, "to devise and execute measures for effectually re-enforcing general Washington, and obstructing the progress of general Howe's army."

This measure was adopted with the best intentions, but was perhaps not in itself the best calculated to reach the desired object. Much inconvenience and disadvantage had been found to result from the want of an efficient executive power; and the necessity of debating every military movement in congress before the commander in chief could feel himself authorized to adopt it, had already occasioned embarrassment to him, and detriment to the service.

A committee of five, it was thought, could act with much greater promptitude and efficiency than the whole congress; but the remedy was wholly inadequate to the amount of the evil. If the committee remained at Philadelphia, the necessity of communicating with an army nearly a hundred miles distant, would still be a serious clog on the movements of the commander in chief; and should they repair to head-quarters, what could they do there, vested with this indefinite authority, but advise upon matters in which the general himself was better versed than they could be?

Colonel Smith, however, with part of the committee, made a visit to the army and general Washington, but returned greatly impressed with the insuperable difficulty of their task, the importance of the crisis, and the abilities and virtues of

the commander in chief, with whom alone they were convinced such powers could advantageously be placed.

Washington was equally impressed with the expediency of an efficient authority being vested in his hands; but it was a delicate subject for him to press upon the attention of congress; and it was not till after they had divested themselves of the executive functions and devolved them on this committee, that he could bring himself to ask for an addition to his power,—not, under the then existing circumstances, at the expense of the powers of congress, but of a committee which neither desired nor in fact used the authority with which they had been clothed.

Hinting the disadvantage of his being obliged to make constant applications to congress for their sanction of measures, the immediate adoption of which was essential to the public interests, he suggested the idea of conferring further powers on himself. "This might," he said, "be termed an application for powers too dangerous to be entrusted." He could only answer, "that desperate diseases require desperate remedies. He could with truth declare, that he felt no lust for power but wished with as much fervency as any man upon the wide extended continent, for an opportunity of turning the sword into a ploughshare; but his feelings as an officer, and as a man, had been such as to force him to say, that no person ever had a greater choice of difficulties to contend with than himself." After stating several measures which he had been compelled to adopt without the sanction of congress, he added—

"It may be thought that I am going a good deal out of the line of my duty, to adopt these measures or advise them freely; a character to lose, an estate to forfeit, the inestimable blessing of liberty at stake, and a life devoted, must be my excuse."

Notwithstanding the irresistible eloquence of this appeal and the decided opinions of the committee in accordance with it, such was the republican jealousy of arbitrary power, then prevalent, that congress hesitated even in the days of the darkest gloom to confer powers beyond the clearly defined lines of their instructions.

When, however, on the twelfth of December, the rapid approach of the British army through Jersey, and the defenceless condition of Philadelphia induced them to remove their sittings to Baltimore, the same resolution was made to contain a clause which gave to general Washington dictatorial power; the congress being willing thus to adopt the most important measure that could be proposed, in this indirect and half concealed manner, although they would not openly avow the whole extent of the alteration they were making in the scheme for carrying on the war, nor confess that they considered their affairs in so alarming a situation as to require this "desperate remedy."

Colonel Smith did not participate in this reluctance, he had unbounded confidence in Washington, and was too much accustomed to respect and approve of military organization not to think it quite right that the commander in chief should be allowed really to command.

He had now an opportunity of another brief visit to his family, one week being allowed between the adjournment at Philadelphia and the re-assembling of congress at Baltimore. He was now but fifty miles from home, and during the continuance of the session at Baltimore was able to make several hasty journeys to York; without any neglect of his duties, for when complaints were made of the cruel treatment which prisoners received from the enemy, and also of the barbarous depredations committed by the British army during their march through Jersey, he was placed on a committee to whom

was entrusted the laborious office of hearing all the evidence on this subject, and collecting from an immense number of authenticated instances a just ground of remonstrance and even of retaliation.

The capture of the Hessians at Trenton, and the defeat of the enemy at Princeton, had greatly cheered the spirits of the people. Hope succeeded to the deepest despondency; and confidence in the abilities of the general was redoubled.

Colonel Smith never despaired; his constitutional buoyancy of spirits did not at any time forsake him, although he well knew the difficulties of the contest, and had much, individually, at stake.

His sanguine and happy temperament led him to very early anticipations of success, and the following letter will depict very plainly his readiness to augur well from every favourable circumstance, and to believe all that he desired.

It was intended for his friend colonel Donaldson, when he began the epistle, but in writing it he changed its destination and addressed it to his wife. The "Dear Sir" is, in the original, cancelled, and it is dated at Baltimore, on the twenty-seventh of January 1777.

"Dear Sir—I hope before this comes to hand, New York will be again in our possession. Fort Washington is certainly ours. Colonel Atlee heard general Robinson say so at New York, when there was not above nine hundred men and most of the Hessians waiting to surrender to us. The tories in New York were packing up their baggage in the utmost hurry and confusion. About two thousand men are sent from Amboy to Staten Island, by the enemy probably to endeavour to save New York; I hope they will arrive too late. General Sullivan has gone to Amboy; the Jersey militia are very alert in distressing the enemy; the enemy daily diminish by capture, sickness and desertion. Howe is so

frightened, he has recalled his troops from Rhode Island, they will be followed close by the New Englanders employed in opposing them. I expect the two widows will take a matrimonial swing to-day or to-morrow. I hope colonel Hartly has got in his recruiting airs, my compliments to him and colonel Donaldson, Mrs. Johnson, and all friends.

"P. S. You'll see this letter was intended for colonel Donaldson, and to be accompanied by one to you, but time won't admit of writing, show him this; I will write more at large to-morrow."

In March of this year, the Pennsylvania assembly had to make a new choice of delegates, and colonel Smith, having already suffered severely in his private interests, by his unremitted attention to public affairs for so long a period, declined a re-election.

He returned to his professional occupations with renewed energy, and gave his attention also to the iron works which he possessed on the Codorus creek. This establishment furnished him with the occasion of many a jest, but became so evidently an unprofitable and even ruinous concern, that he determined to wind up the business and get rid of it with any sacrifice.

His loss by the iron works was supposed by his best friends to amount to about five thousand pounds,—he had property remaining, however, that was sufficient for his wants; and he compensated himself by uttering a thousand jokes against the two superintendents, under whose mismanagement he had suffered so heavily, designating one of them as a knave and the other a fool, and being on all occasions particularly exact in keeping the distinctive epithet of each punctually applied to him.

This was not a season, however, for a man like colonel

Smith to retire entirely from public affairs. He had entered too deeply into the interests and anxieties of the conflict, to be an unconcerned or quiet spectator. The British had landed at the head of Elk; the battles of Brandywine and Germantown had been fought; the enemy were in possession of Philadelphia; and cabals, dissensions and discontents, had appeared in the army, in congress, and among the public at large.

He could not, therefore, in the crisis of that particular period, refuse an election to congress in December of the year 1777.

Before this time, the near approach of the British to Philadelphia had obliged congress to remove to Lancaster, and they soon fixed their sittings at York, as a more convenient place and at least equally safe. It was, indeed, no excess of prudence which induced them to place the Susquehannah between themselves and their foes.

This location of congress was agreeable to colonel Smith in many respects, but it was even more incompatible with his attention to professional pursuits than when at Philadelphia. Besides sitting in congress during several hours of the morning and afternoon, the evening was naturally, and with his social disposition unavoidably, given to the delightful duties of hospitality.

So completely was every private consideration sacrificed to the desire of contributing to the general good, that his office was closed against his clients, and given up to the occupation of the board of war.

In the beginning of the next summer, however, the enemy thought proper to evacuate the capital, and congress resumed their session at Philadelphia, on the second of July.

Colonel Smith had been appointed one of a very important committee, charged with the duty of collecting testimony con-

cerning the barbarous treatment of prisoners by the enemy, and the unjustifiable destruction of private property committed by the British armies.

This committee had made a report after he had vacated his seat in the year 1777, but to which he had contributed more than his share of the labour necessary for its preparation. This report stated,

"That in every place where the enemy has been, there are heavy complaints of oppressions, injury and insults suffered by the inhabitants from officers, soldiers, and Americans disaffected to their country's cause. The committee found these complaints so greatly diversified, that as it was impossible to enumerate them, so it appeared exceedingly difficult to give a distinct and comprehensive view of them, or such an account as would not, if published, appear extremely defective, when read by the unhappy sufferers or the country in general.

"In order, however, in some degree to answer the design of their appointment, they determined to divide the object of their inquiry into four parts. First, the wanton and oppressive devastation of the country and destruction of property. Second, the inhuman treatment of those who were so unhappy as to become prisoners. Third, the savage butchery of many who had submitted or were incapable of resistance. Fourth, the lust and brutality of the soldiers in the abusing of women."

Upon each of these heads the committee found evidence to support very striking specifications, and their report concludes that "the cry of barbarity and cruelty is but too well founded; and as in conversation, those who are cool to the American cause, have nothing to oppose to the facts but their being incredible, and not like what they are pleased to style the generosity and clemency of the English nation; the committee beg leave to observe, that one of the circumstances

most frequently occurring in the inquiry, was the opprobrious and disdainful names given to the Americans; these do not need any proof, as they occur so frequently in the newspapers printed under their direction, and in the intercepted letters of those who are officers and call themselves gentlemen. It is easy, therefore, to see what must be the conduct of a soldiery greedy of prey, towards a people whom they have been taught to look upon, not as freemen defending their rights on principle, but as desperadoes and profligates, who have risen up against law and order in general, and wish the subversion of society itself. This is the most candid and charitable manner in which the committee can account for the melancholy truths which they have been obliged to report. Indeed the same deluding principle seems to govern persons and bodies of the highest rank in Britain. For it is worthy of notice, that not pamphleteers only, but king and parliament, constantly call those acts of lenity, which on their first publication filled this whole continent with resentment and horror."

To give greater effect to this manifesto, congress ordered that it should be published with the affidavits on which it was founded; and although enough of these had been exhibited to the committee to satisfy their minds of the truth of all the assertions of the report, yet it was considered expedient to strengthen the proof as much as possible by additional testimony.

Great part of this duty remained to be performed, and colonel Smith absented himself from his seat in congress during the month of July and part of August, in order to devote his attention more efficiently to this object.

He repaired to Philadelphia and resumed his seat on the eleventh of August; but he did not any longer feel it incumbent on him to yield himself so exclusively to public affairs. The British had been chased across Jersey and defeated at

Monmouth; the French alliance was concluded and the French fleet actually on the coast; the articles of confederation, after being debated at thirty-nine different times,—in those days of prompt despatch and short speeches, a prodigiously lengthened discussion,—had been ratified, and he had had the satisfaction of signing them, as the authorized agent of Pennsylvania. Every thing promised a fortunate termination of the war, and strong hopes were entertained that that consummation was not far distant. Under these circumstances he began to think of giving place in the public councils to younger or less courageous men who might very well bring the ship into harbour on a smooth sea, although they could not have been so safely trusted with the helm in the stormy days that had just passed away.

The following letter written by him at this period, to his wife, exhibits very plainly the state of his feelings, which led him in the succeeding November, to make a final relinquishment of his seat in congress. It was dated in the "Congress Chamber," September the fourth, 1778.

"This morning I sent a bundle of newspapers and a half finished letter by Mr. Hahn. Yesterday I dined with the president at his own house, he lives elegantly and keeps house himself. We had an elegant dinner and very good claret and madeira. No further accounts from Rhode Island that can be depended on, but one letter mentions they expect the French fleet from Boston again, and if so they will not quit the Island. If any thing certain arrives before this letter is sealed, I will mention it in a postscript. But for this unlucky storm that scattered the fleets of France and England we had the best ground to hope that Rhode Island would have been recovered, and that would have put an end to the war in all human probability, but if Heaven determines otherwise, we must submit; I am tired of the city heartily,

it is very expensive living, and not very agreeable; since I left the Indian Queen, I have paid for my room and bed, and breakfast and supper, six pounds per week, and four pounds per week more, for my dinner at another house without any drink.

"Yesterday, congress agreed to meet twice a day, so that we break up at one, and meet at three o'clock. I told Mr. Shee my lodging was too dear, and I did not like to lodge at one house and dine at another half a mile off. He agreed to board me at twenty dollars per week including dinner, which is fifty shillings less than I had paid. I breakfasted with Mr. Wilson and Ross at Mrs Honse's, she said her price was twenty dollars a week which I will accept of, unless I can lodge at captain M'Collough's or Mr. Nichols', for being now able to dine at the usual time, I can get board in many places where I could not while we dined at four o'clock.

"I am laying my account upon returning about the tenth of next month, to be able to attend Carlisle and York courts.

"Beef and mutton are half a crown, veal three shillings, and all kinds of goods as dear as ever.

"I put fifteen hundred pounds in the loan office, and have got about ninety pounds fees, and a promise of a hundred pound fee more, these are the first fees I ever got in Philadelphia; my fees here must clear my teeth, and my pay in congress go to you my dear, and the children. I believe if you would consent to come here and live, I could get into pretty good business in the law way, but it is a hazard, and two thousand a year would, as times go, be not more than enough to live in any tolerable style here. York and Carlisle are sure for business though fees are not so high as here.

"Mrs. Stevenson sent me a forty dollar fee, to turn her husband out of her house, and general Thompson assures

me, she will sign her claim to the widows' house on any separate paper, but not where he signed.

"Poor Mrs. Shugart with Mr. Armor called on me to assist in getting a pass from congress, for leave for her to go to New York to try if she can get her husband home, I much doubt her success, but got her the pass. Our prisoners there whose friends cannot send them hard money suffer greatly. I tried to get Tommy Armor a good post in the army, but missed it; had he spoken or written to me in time, I believe it might have been had for him.

"I dined at major Nichols' one day and Kitty seems very clever, and is visited by good sort of people.

"You, my dear, have been fatigued to death with the plantation affairs; I can only pity but not help you. Did you hear from Betsey's; is Peggy any thing more talkative? She sent a good letter, tell her to write me another.

"I went to Mr. Hillegass (where I go often) with Mrs. Nichols to deliver the letters. I have not time to finish, but you will have nonsense enough."

A postscript dated fifth September, 1778, adds that "an account has arrived that there was a battle at Rhode Island, in which the English were worsted."

After passing the whole of the year seventeen hundred and seventy-nine and part of the following year in an uninterrupted prosecution of his professional pursuits, he was prevailed on again to perform a tour of public duty, and accepted a seat in the assembly of Pennsylvania, which he held during one session only.

His usual activity was transferred to this new scene of action, and we find him appointed on almost all the most important and responsible committees.

The war having now drawn towards a close, he excused himself from any further public duties which would require

his absence from home. The practice of the law gave him full occupation and competent remuneration, and his excellent spirits and humorous disposition made the labours and vexations of this very fatiguing profession sit lightly on his mental and corporeal health. Old age advanced upon him with a lingering step, and he was able to accept and exercise the local offices of chief-burgess of the town of York and trustee of the academy, at a time of life when most of his co-evals had survived their energy. It was not until the year 1800 that he withdrew from the bar, after having been a practising lawyer for about sixty years.

The peculiarities of his disposition and habits continued to distinguish him to the very last. Social, jocular and friendly, he was the life of all conviviality; and the powers of his very retentive memory had in so long an exercise, supplied him with a store of rich and diverting anecdote that was inexhaustible and unequalled. He lived to see his friend, and the object of his most enthusiastic admiration—Washington, twice elected by the unanimous suffrage of the nation to that most elevated of all stations, the chief magistracy of a free people. He lived, too, which seemed to him a much more surprising event, to find himself opposed in politics to his old friend and co-patriot of 1776, Thomas M'Kean; and he had again the gratification of supporting him at his last election to the office of governor of Pennsylvania.

He retained his veneration for religion and its ministers as well as his regular attention to public worship; and would always repress every licentious jest at the expense of sacred subjects, as he would with equal promptitude and much more warmth repel and reprobate every word or insinuation uttered in his hearing to the disparagement of general Washington. He was a member of the federal party in the political divisions that distracted Pennsylvania with even more bitterness

than was exhibited in other states; but with his temperament and his recollections it was impossible for him to be a very angry or implacable partisan.

He continued in habits of epistolary correspondence with Dr. Franklin, Samuel Adams and many others of the patriots of the revolution, during their lives, but outlived the greater part of his early associates; a valuable collection of letters was unfortunately lost in the year eighteen hundred and five, when his office, with all its contents, was destroyed by fire.

On the eleventh day of July, in the following year, he was gathered to his fathers.

The monument erected over his grave, in the burial ground of the English Presbyterian church, at York, records his death as having occurred in the ninety-third year of his age; but there is reason to believe he was not so old by several years. His pertinacious refusal to give any information on the subject of his age had never been overcome, and it remains a matter of conjecture.

He had three sons and two daughters, of whom one only of each survived him; and of these the son, Mr. James Smith, died at York a few years after his father, and the daughter still lives at the same place, the consort of Mr. James Johnston.

In his domestic relations he was invariably affectionate and kind; and it seems to have been his almost singular happiness to pass through a period of extreme agitation and distress, with such buoyant cheerfulness and gamesome humour, as effectually guarded his heart and health from the corroding effects of those anxieties which brought the seriousness of old age before its time upon the spirits of most of his co-patriots, and drew down many of them to an early grave.

GEORGE TAYLOR.

Although George Taylor, during his life time, took a prominent part in the political affairs of the times, and was a man much esteemed and honoured, he has left behind him scarce a trace, by which we can discover his sentiments or actions. Nothing can better convince us of the uncertainty attending the minute events recorded in civil history. Fifty years have not passed away, since a thousand facts might have been obtained from numerous and authentic sources; yet now we are reduced to the uncertain recollections of a few old men, or the slight and mutilated circumstances which industry may gather, from the fleeting records of past times.

Of the early life of Mr. Taylor, we have been able to discover almost nothing. He was born in the year 1716. He was an Irishman by birth, and is said to have been the son of a respectable clergyman of that country, who gave him a better education than was usually bestowed, in those days, on youths who were destined to make their own fortunes in the world, and who had no advancement to hope either from patronage or wealth. He was quick, active and intelligent; and his father thinking his talents might be turned to some account, determined to educate him for the profession of medicine, of which science it is believed he actually commenced the

study. His turn of mind, however, did not fit him for the labours which such pursuits require; he was soon disgusted with the slow progress that he made, and determined to seek his fortune in a life of more variety and adventure. What led him particularly to select America, as the scene of his new efforts, we know not; but hearing of a vessel about to sail for Philadelphia or New York, he deserted his medical studies, and without sixpence in his pocket, embarked as a redemptioner on board of her.

On his arrival in America, he bound himself for a term of years as a labourer to one Savage, who paid the expenses he had incurred in his passage from Ireland. This person was the owner or occupier of some extensive iron-works, at Durham, a village on the river Delaware, eight or ten miles below Easton, and to that establishment Taylor accompanied him.

Immediately on his arrival, he was set to work as a "filler," that is, a workman employed to throw coal into the furnace when in blast. He had not been accustomed to such rude work, and this was soon discovered from the blisters on his hands. The fact was mentioned by some of his associates to Savage, and he, taking compassion on the lad, whom he had found to be remarkably intelligent and educated beyond his present situation, asked him if he could not handle a pen better than a shovel. Taylor agreed joyfully to the change, was installed as a clerk, and soon made himself, in this situation, a most important member of the establishment. He retained it several years, and when at length Savage died, married his widow, and became the proprietor of the whole concern. Here, by prudent management and great industry he contrived to amass a very considerable fortune, but either allured by more promising prospects, or tired of his old abode, he afterwards purchased a considerable estate

on the shores of the river Lehigh, in the county of Northampton, and built a large house upon it, where he fixed his residence.

Mr. Taylor had not been long an inhabitant of Northampton, before he was called into public life. In the provincial assembly which met at Philadelphia, on the fifteenth of October, 1764, we find him representing that county, and placed immediately on the committee of aggrievances, one of the most important and useful situations at that time, and still more so at a future period. He also took an active part in the discussion of the great question which then agitated the province, the alteration of the charter, and the reformation of the proprietary government, into which many serious abuses had crept.

In the month of June, 1765, the speaker of assembly had received the proposal of the house of representatives of Massachusetts Bay, for a general congress of delegates at New York in the ensuing autumn. At the meeting of the assembly in September, he laid the communication before them, and on the same day the measure was agreed to without a dissenting voice. The speaker Mr. Fox, Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Bryan, and Mr. Morton, were elected as delegates, and a committee was appointed to prepare a draught of instructions for their government. On this committee Mr. Taylor was appointed; the instructions were drawn up, and on the following day, presented to and approved by the house. They afford one of the many instances of that caution, with which all the provincial legislatures engaged in the controversy with the mother country; they were resolved honestly and firmly to assert and maintain their rights, but at the same time they were determined to commit no hasty act, which should throw back the censure on themselves, and involve them in the charge of disaffection and rebellion, while they were claiming nothing

more than had been guaranteed by their charters and enjoyed by their ancestors. "You are to consult together," say the instructions, "on the present circumstances of the colonies, and the difficulties they are and must be reduced to by the late acts of parliament, and to join in loyal and dutiful addresses to the king and the two houses of parliament; humbly representing the condition of the colonies, and imploring relief; but you are to take care that such addresses, in which you join, are drawn up in the most decent and respectful terms, so as to avoid every expression that can give the least offence to his majesty, or to either house of parliament."

In the month of October, 1765, Mr. Taylor was again elected as the representative of Northampton county in the provincial assembly, and again became an active member in several useful committees, and a participator in all the leading measures which were introduced. In the month of June following, we find him one of the gentlemen appointed to draw up an address of thanks to the king, on the repeal of the stamp act; and it affords an instance of the satisfaction which was felt at that period by the colonies, in every indication of returning good feeling on the part of the mother country. "The paternal concern," say they, "for the welfare and prosperity of all your majesty's subjects, however remote, which your majesty has demonstrated on this very important occasion, cannot fail of fixing, in the hearts of the good people of this province, the most inviolable affection and loyalty to your royal person and government, and exciting their sincerest prayers for the long continuance of your majesty on the throne of those extensive dominions, whose happiness and glory have been the invariable objects of your care and attention.

"The assurance which your majesty has been pleased to give us of 'your approbation of the dutiful behaviour of the province of Pennsylvania, amidst the too prevailing distractions which have agitated the other colonies;' fills our breasts with sentiments of most respectful gratitude, and demands our warmest thanks: this instance of your majesty's condescension and goodness, must engage the people we represent to continue to recommend themselves still further, by their dutiful behaviour, to your royal favour and protection.

"We humbly entreat your majesty will further permit us to embrace this opportunity of expressing the high sense we entertain of the justice and tenderness of your parliament, who, ready to hear and consider the aggrievances of your majesty's subjects, have, upon a just representation of the unhappy circumstances of your colonies, manifested their good dispositions and lenity to us, in our late distressed situation.

"Fully sensible how much the happiness of your people depends on a perfect harmony and connexion between Great Britain and her colonies, we assure your majesty, that no care or endeavours shall be wanting, on our part, to promote and establish that union of affections and interests, so essential to the welfare of both, and to preserve that loyalty and affection to your majesty's person and government, which we esteem to be one of their first and most important duties."

To show still further their good will, and the joy which they experienced at this reconciliation, they added to the address a resolution, in which they expressed their readiness to meet, in every constitutional way, the wishes of the British government. "Whenever his majesty's service," they resolve, "shall for the future require the aids of the inhabitants of this province, and they shall be called upon for that purpose, in a constitutional way, this house, and we doubt not all future assemblies, will think it their indispensable duty to

grant such aids to his majesty, as the safety of the colonies requires, and the circumstances and abilities of this province may permit, unless the proprietaries' instructions to their deputy governors, respecting proprietary private interest, shall continue to interfere."

From this period until the year 1770, Mr. Taylor continued to take his seat in the assembly, and was always placed on the several standing committees of which he had been formerly a member, as well as named on many others of importance. We find him on those appointed to amend the judiciary establishment, regulate the assessment of taxes, investigate the rights of the house, to choose the printer of the public laws, raise loans on bills of credit, prepare a system for improving the navigation of the great rivers of the province, and several others.

In the early part of the year 1768, he exerted himself strenuously in bringing to justice the perpetrators of some horrid massacres of the savages on the frontier, which had nearly involved the province in an Indian war. Thinking that the governor had not acted with all the promptness which the matter demanded, he was appointed by the assembly, with several other members, to draw up an address urging his attention to it. In this manly address they call upon him, with all the warmth of honourable feeling, to exert the powers of his office to bring the offenders to justice, to avenge the innocent and murdered Indians, and to save the province from the calamities which threatened it. "We are the last persons," they say, "who would advise you to extend your power in any case beyond the bounds prescribed by law. But while we wish to have your authority properly confined, we should be wanting in our duty to the people, if we were not equally desirous to see it exerted to its legal extent, whenever their security demands it; which we are persuaded has not been

done on this important occasion. Murders have been long since committed, and the offenders are not yet apprehended, nor, as we have ever understood, has a single warrant been issued for the purpose: murders perpetrated at noon-day, in a populous borough, before a number of spectators, and yet, as it is said, the names of the criminals remain undiscovered. There is a manifest failure of justice somewhere. From whence can it arise?—Not from the laws—they are adequate to the offence. It must then be either from a debility, or inexcusable neglect in the executive part of government, to put those laws in execution. And we hope your honour will excuse us, when we say that it is the peculiar province of a ruler, and, "without violence to the constitution," he may and ought to superintend the administration of the laws, so far, at least, as to see that the magistracy faithfully discharge their duty, and to remove those who are neglectful thereof.

"We trust, your honour," they continue, "will not think us too importunate in this momentous affair, in which, we conceive, the future safety of the people, and the honour of the government, are most intimately concerned; for you will be pleased to consider how much consequence to both it is, that the authors of crimes of so 'black a dye' should be strictly punished. It is, in all probability, owing to the encouragement, arising from the impunity with which those criminals have been permitted to escape, that the subsequent murders in this province have been committed. Had exemplary punishment been inflicted on the offenders in the first instance, it is more than probable, that the transgressors in the second would have been deterred from the perpetration of the like offences. But should men, who have bid defiance to the executive powers of government, and so audaciously trampled on its authority, be allowed to remain in the province longer unpunished; we are very apprehensive, that the

persons of the inhabitants will not be safe from their violent attempts, the transition being easy from the murder of Indians, under the protection of government, to the murder of the subject, nor will the colony be secured from the calamities attending a war with the natives, occasioned by these repeated insults offered to the persons of their people.

"Besides, it is undoubtedly the soundest policy to do justice to the Indians, without which the government can never, with any propriety, demand a satisfaction from them for the murders we have reason to believe they have lately committed on several of our people. It therefore behoves the government to exert itself in a matter so interesting to the province; and having done that right to the Indians, which they expect from us, we request your honour would take the necessary steps to obtain the like justice from them, for the outrages they have committed, in violation of the treaties of friendship subsisting between us."

From this period until the year 1775, we do not find the name of Mr. Taylor in the journals of the assembly. He was actively occupied at his new establishment, in carrying on some iron works which he had there erected, and in so doing had associated himself with several other gentlemen, engaged in the same pursuit. Owing, however, to some disadvantages in his present situation, he did not meet with the success which had attended his former efforts, and after some time vainly spent in the attempt, and the loss of a considerable part of his fortune, he returned to Durham, the seat of his former prosperity. During this period, the only public offices which he held were those of a judge of the county courts, over which he presided, and of colonel of militia, from which he derived the title that he was usually addressed by.

In October, 1775, he was again elected a delegate to the provincial assembly, and took his seat therein on the fourteenth of that month. He resumed at once his useful character as a legislator, and was placed on several important committees, such as those on the grants of the crown, the settlement of the Connecticut claims, procuring arms for the public service, preparing a system of military discipline for the province, and above all, the committee of safety, which was now in fact the great revolutionary organ of the government. On the fourth of November, 1775, the legislature proceeded to elect the delegates to the succeeding continental congress; and shortly after they had chosen them, Mr. Taylor was appointed, with several other gentlemen, to prepare and report to the assembly a draught of instructions by which their conduct was to be governed. This duty, to which we have alluded in the life of James Smith, was one of much delicacy and difficulty. It was not to be concealed that the affairs of the colonies had arrived at a crisis when the wise might anticipate, and the bold hope for, a decided resistance and an eventual separation. To this issue Pennsylvania seems to have looked with some reluctance. She had always been a colony peculiarly favoured by the crown, and had received from it many direct expressions of its good will; her proprietary government had been conducted without a shadow of political oppression, though its history is now and then disfigured with controversies about the personal rights of the descendants of the founder, and the mutual privileges granted and reserved by charter; her constitution was liberal, indeed democratic to a degree which existed in few others of the colonies; and a large portion of the population were by habit, prejudice and religion, but little inclined to measures of uncompromising violence. It is true, the rash and arbitrary proceedings of the British government were fast wearing

away all these bonds of fellowship, and Pennsylvania had a spirit too high not to stand firmly by the other colonies, to support them with her power, and to participate their dangers. In this state of affairs Mr. Taylor and the rest o the committee prepared the instructions for the delegates in the following form : "The trust reposed in you," they say, addressing the newly elected members, "is of such a nature, and the modes of executing it may be so diversified in the course of your deliberations, that it is scarcely possible to give you particular instructions respecting it. We therefore, in general, direct, that you, or any four of you, meet in congress the delegates of the several colonies now assembled in this city, and any such delegates as may meet in congress next year; that you consult together on the present critical and alarming state of public affairs; that you exert your utmost endeavours to agree upon, and recommend, such measures as you shall judge to afford the best prospect of obtaining redress of American grievances, and restoring that union and harmony between Great Britain and the colonies, so essential to the welfare and happiness of both countries.

"Though the oppressive measures of the British parliament and administration have compelled us to resist their violence by force of arms, yet we strictly enjoin you, that you, in behalf of this colony, dissent from, and utterly reject any propositions, should such be made, that may cause or lead to, a separation from our mother country, or a change of the form of this government."

The ensuing winter and the spring of 1776, however, wrought a great and rapid change in the sentiments of the people. They became every day more and more convinced of the necessity of separation; and began to prepare more and more earnestly for direct resistance. Four months had

scarcely elapsed since the report which we have just mentioned, so guarded and pacific in its tenor, was presented by one committee, of which Mr. Taylor was a member, when another to which he also belonged, laid before the assembly a document which bears all the marks of a determined and indignant spirit. "The committee," say they, "have ever since their appointment applied themselves with the greatest zeal and fidelity, to the important trust confided to them, in providing means for the defence of this province; they were, however, such means only as were thought more immediately requisite for our security, against the attempts made by a naval armament, and were besides necessarily confined within the limits of the funds allotted to them by your honourable house; but they beg leave to represent, that, as every day brings with it fresh proofs of the violence of the British ministry, and of their fixed purpose to subdue the free spirit of America, that has yet given such obstruction to all their schemes of tyranny and despotism; a purpose assisted too by an obsequious parliament, which may not speak the genuine sense of the nation, though it has unhappily the direction of its force, it truly becomes us to prepare seriously for the storm gathering over the colonies, and which, in the uncertainty of its course, may, in a few weeks, fall upon this province. This being the idea of the committee, they have come to the following resolution, claiming the most earnest attention of your honourable house thereto.

"Resolved, 'That application be made to the honourable the house of representatives, praying that they will take order for the raising of two thousand men, to act in the defence of this province, and this board will represent it as their opinion, that it will be most for the public service, that one battalion of regular troops be formed out of that number, and the remainder be a body of rifle-men.'

"The committee beg leave to solicit your attention to another object, also of extensive importance, the military association: the general sentiments concerning which, they have, in the recess of assembly, had an opportunity of collecting, and though such numbers already have, and, we hope, will still engage in it, under its present form, as may prove a considerable addition to our strength, yet, as there are material objections made to it, and as they understand are to be laid before your honourable house by divers respectable bodies of men, they submit to you, whether it will not be highly expedient, and consistent with good policy, immediately to remove every cause of discontent, on this head, from the minds of the associators, who, under an apprehension of partial and unequal burthens imposed on them, have nevertheless had the virtue not to refuse their services to their country, in confidence that your honourable house will reconsider the several provisions and regulations complained of, and give them satisfaction therein."

It is interesting thus to observe the gradual change of public opinion, in a colony where it could not be attributed to any direct injury which might have created a momentary hostility, but solely to a general system of oppression which all were forced to resist. We shall, therefore, add another document of the assembly of Pennsylvania, although Mr. Taylor does not appear to have been immediately concerned in its composition, as he was absent from the house at the time. It has not, so far as we are aware, ever been presented to the public except in large official journals, and will serve to complete the chain of those successive and gradual events which led from harmony to resistance, and finally to separation. We have seen what were the instructions given to the delegates to the continental congress in November, 1775—in June, 1776, they were as follows: "When by our last in-

structions we strictly enjoined you, in behalf of this colony, to dissent from and utterly reject any propositions, should such be made, that might cause or lead to a separation from Great Britain, or a change of the form of this government, our restrictions did not arise from any diffidence of your ability, prudence or integrity, but from an earnest desire to serve the good people of Pennsylvania with fidelity, in times so full of alarming dangers and perplexing difficulties.

"The situation of public affairs is since so greatly altered that we now think ourselves justifiable in removing the restrictions laid upon you by those instructions.

"The contempt with which the last petition of the honourable congress has been treated: The late act of parliament, declaring the just resistance of the colonists, against violences actually offered, to be rebellion, excluding them from the protection of the crown, and even compelling some of them to bear arms against their countrymen: The treaties of the king of Great Britain, with other princes, for engaging foreign mercenaries to aid the forces of that kingdom, in their hostile enterprises, against America; and his answer to the petition of the lord mayor, aldermen and commons of the city of London, manifest such a determined and implacable resolution to effect the utter destruction of these colonies, that all hopes of a reconciliation, on reasonable terms, are extinguished. Nevertheless, it is our ardent desire, that a civil war with all its attending miseries, could be ended by a secure and honourable peace.

"We therefore hereby authorize you to concur with the other delegates in congress, in forming such further compacts between the united colonies, concluding such treaties with foreign kingdoms and states, and in adopting such other measures as, upon a view of all circumstances, shall be judged necessary for promoting the liberty, safety and interests

of America; reserving to the people of this colony the sole and exclusive right of regulating the internal government and police of the same.

"The happiness of these colonies has, during the whole course of this fatal controversy, been our first wish. Their reconciliation with Great Britain our next. Ardently have we prayed for the accomplishment of both. But, if we must renounce the one or other, we humbly trust in the mercies of the supreme governor of the universe, that we shall not stand condemned before his throne, if our choice is determined by that over-ruling law of self-preservation, which his divine wisdom has thought fit to implant in the hearts of his creatures."

These views of the assembly were in perfect accordance with the wishes of the people; but owing to the strong reluctance which existed among many of the members, of thus making a breach which could never be repaired, they were not adopted with the unanimity which so great a measure required. Indeed it had become evident that an essential change ought to be made in the nature of the government, and the whole energies of the province should be exerted, in giving weight to the great object at which congress were aiming. The regular assembly was, therefore, allowed gradually to cease by the absence of its members, and a temporary body, called a conference, consisting of committees chosen by each county, met at Philadelphia, and assumed by degrees a large portion of the legislative powers. On the twenty-fourth of June, they took up the subject which had engaged the attention of the assembly; the dissolution of allegiance to Great Britain, and coinciding in the views which we have seen that body adopt, passed a resolution unanimously, as the deputies of the people of Pennsylvania, in which they expressed their willingness to concur in a vote

of congress, declaring the united colonies free and independent states, and asserted that this measure did not originate in ambition or in impatience of lawful authority, but that they were driven to it in obedience to the first principles of nature, by the oppressions and cruelties of the king and parliament, as the only measure left to preserve and establish their liberties, and transmit them inviolate to posterity.

Emboldened by this approbation and that of most of the colonies, congress proceeded zealously towards the great end. But in their body, there were yet many who looked with fearful anticipation on the consequences. Among these were several of the delegates from Pennsylvania, and neither the instructions of the assembly nor the resolutions of the conference had yet changed their sentiments. When we mention among these the name of that great and good man John Dickinson, we give sufficient proof that the cause of these sentiments was no unmanly fear. It was a reluctance to jeopardize the future prospects of the country, by involving them in a war with a powerful nation; it was, they asserted, changing the wholesome system of resistance to arbitrary acts, into the pursuit of ends which the happiness of the people did not require. It was relinquishing the safe ground on which the colonies had planted themselves, and rushing into a war which in its course must bring with it slaughter and inexpressible distress, and in its end might fix a severe despotism on the ruins of liberties that had been rashly hazarded.

Fortunately there was energy enough in congress to resist these plausible but delusive opinions, and when the ultimate question was proposed, an approving vote by all the colonies, gave to the measure of resistance that unanimity which secured its eventual success. Of the delegates from Pennsyl-

vania, however, five still retained their sentiments in opposition to the majority. The approbation of the state was only obtained by the casting vote of Mr. Morton. Under these circumstances a new choice of representatives became necessary, and on the twentieth of July the convention of the state proceeded to elect them. Mr. Morton, Dr. Franklin, Mr. Morris, and Mr. Wilson were re-elected, and in lieu of the other five gentlemen were substituted Mr. Taylor, Mr. Ross, Mr. Clymer, Dr. Rush and Mr. Smith. On the same day Mr. Taylor took his seat in congress.

On the second of August following Mr. Taylor signed the Declaration of Independence. It was not until that time, that any delegate actually affixed his signature to the instrument; for although it was passed and proclaimed on the fourth of July preceding, the copy engrossed on parchment, was not prepared until nearly a month after. These circumstances have once or twice given rise to errors, but they are fully explained in a letter from Mr. M'Kean, one of the delegates from Delaware, which will be found inserted in his life. The acts of Mr. Taylor while a member of congress, are involved in the same obscurity which surrounds every other part of his life, public and private. The journals of congress do not often mention him, nor have we any means of forming an opinion of the peculiar turn of talent which he displayed, or line of services which he rendered. He was engaged for some time in a negotiation, on behalf of the United States, with several of the Indian tribes on the borders of the Susquehanna, and appears to have formed a treaty with them at Easton, where he had now taken up his residence.

In March, 1777, he retired from congress and never after engaged in public service. Settled at Easton, in the neighbourhood of his estates, he devoted the declining years of his life to increase their value, and somewhat to recover from

the losses he had sustained by long estrangement from his domestic affairs. In these peaceful pursuits four years slipped quietly away. On the twenty-third of February, 1781, he died, being, at the time, sixty-five years of age. He has no legitimate living descendants. He had two children by his wife, a daughter who was never married, and a son James, an attorney, who died before his father, when only twenty-nine years of age. He left, however, several children, but the last of them was drowned in the Delaware some years ago.

We have no other means to judge of the peculiar character of Mr. Taylor, than the slight incidents we have recorded in this memoir. From these we may fairly conclude, that he was a man of strong native parts, and of honourable conduct, industrious and enterprising in his habits, and useful in times requiring firmness and strong good sense. He is of course almost forgotten, even in the country where he used to reside; but the old men of the neighbourhood who recollect him, when asked about his character reply, that "he was a fine man and a furious whig."

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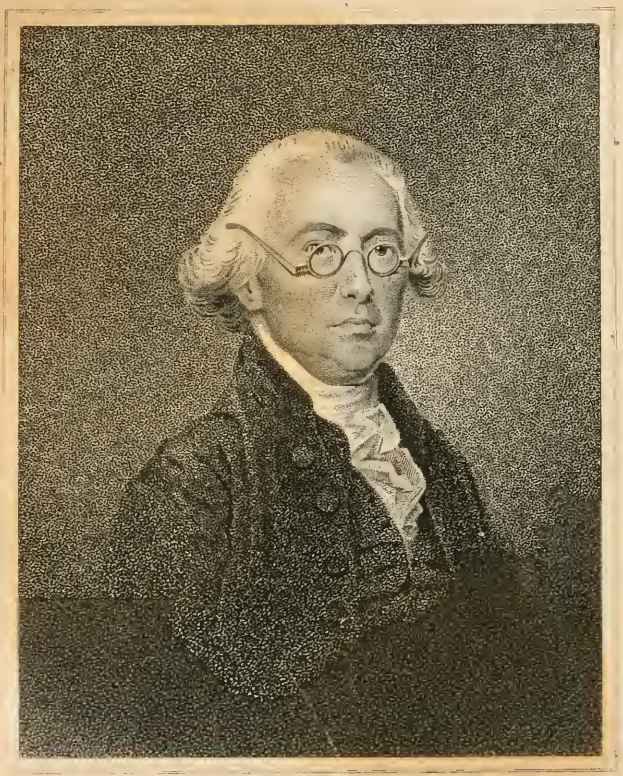

JAMES WILSON.

Engraved by J. B. Longacre from a miniature

in possession of Mrs. Hollingsworth.

JAMES WILSON.

James Wilson was born in the Lowlands of Scotland. His family was respectable, but not wealthy, and resided in the neighbourhood of St. Andrews, formerly the metropolis of the Pictish kingdom, and well known for its university, founded in 1411. His father was a reputable farmer, and a man of character: that he was in good circumstances, appears probable, from the education given to his son; but he is said to have injured his affairs by the same passion for speculation which that son unfortunately inherited. After the death of his father, his mother again married, and must have been in straitened circumstances, as Mr. Wilson frequently sent her pecuniary aid from this country, even when he was himself much embarrassed.

Mr. Wilson received an excellent classical education. After leaving the grammar school, he studied at Glasgow and Edinburgh, and previously, for a short period, at St. Andrews. It was under the tuition of the famous Dr. Blair, in rhetoric, and of the not less celebrated Dr. Watts, in rhetoric and logic, that he laid the foundation of the celebrity which he subsequently acquired, as a powerful orator, and almost irresistible logician. His youthful character was correct and praise-worthy.

Soon after the completion of his education, and without selecting or embracing any profession, he resolved to emigrate to America, and endeavour, by the exercise of the talents, industry, and integrity, which he amply possessed, to realize, in a new country, that independence which his own could not afford. He arrived at New York in about the twenty-first year of his age, bringing with him an excellent classical and scientific education, and attainments especially conspicuous in history and natural law. In the beginning of the year 1766 he reached Philadelphia, with highly recommendatory letters to gentlemen of that city, one of whom was Dr. Richard Peters, rector of Christ and St. Peter's churches, by whom he was particularly patronised, and introduced as an usher into the Philadelphia college and academy. Dr. Peters had been the secretary of the province, and, during forty years, the confidential friend and agent of the proprietaries. He was an original trustee of the college and academy, and being a man of learning, and zealous in its cause, was a competent judge of the capacity of any person presenting himself as a tutor, or professor. Mr. Wilson was considered by the trustee, before whom he was examined, as the best classical scholar who had offered as a tutor in the Latin department of the college.

In this office he only remained a few months; when, through the instrumentality of his early, familiar, and constant friends, bishop White and judge Peters, he obtained the situation of student of law, in the office of Mr. John Dickinson. The funds necessary to accomplish this object, and for maintenance during the prosecution of his studies, consisted of money taken on interest, by the mortgage of a farm which he purchased from his relative, Mr. Annan, a seceding minister, who, it is said, received satisfaction for the property, by assurances made good in Scotland.

After two years ardent application to the study of his profession, Mr. Wilson first settled in Reading, but soon removed to Carlisle, where he became an eminent counsellor at law, and obtained considerable practice, previous to the revolutionary struggle. He afterwards went to Annapolis, in Maryland, and after remaining there one year, removed to Philadelphia, in 1778, where he continued to reside during the remainder of his life.

At an early period of his profession an incident occurred which gave him great consequence in the eyes of the first gentlemen of the provincial bar. There came on for trial, in one of the county courts, a cause of great expectation between the proprietaries of Pennsylvania and Mr. Samuel Wallace, a well known dealer in lands. Mr. Wilson was one of the counsel to the latter, and Mr. Chew, then attorney-general, appeared for the proprietaries. It drew the attention of all present, that Mr. Wilson had not spoken long before Mr. Chew fixed his eyes on him with intense interest, and continued in that act to the end of the argument. When he had concluded, the counsel on the same side of the question went aside and deliberated whether it would be expedient to add to what had already been submitted by their colleague, who had spoken first. This was determined in the negative. One of the gentlemen was Joseph Reed, esquire. Before the close of the session of the court he was retained in another proprietary cause; and his standing at the bar was henceforward lofty, firm, and unalterable.

At a time when universal agitation prevailed amongst all classes of society, with respect to the disputes existing between Great Britain and her North American colonies, and when the minds of those best qualified, by nature and education, to enter on the subject, were intensely excited by patriotic resentments and gloomy anticipations, it was not to be

expected that Mr. Wilson would remain an idle spectator of passing events. The moment he landed on our shores, he had claimed for himself a new country: he was an American in principle, if not by birth. He commenced his political career as soon as the British government began their oppressions. He wrote and published many able and luminous essays in favour of the rights of America, and never swerved from his attachment to our cause.

Mr. Wilson was a member of the provincial convention of Pennsylvania, which met early in the summer of 1774, a few months previous to the meeting of the first general congress. During its session, his talents and political science became known throughout the city of Philadelphia, and it being understood that the assembly, at its first meeting, would appoint delegates to congress, the convention recommended that Mr. Dickinson and Mr. Wilson should be among the number. This recommendation was rejected; a measure ascribed to the influence of the speaker, Mr. Galloway, an eminent lawyer of Philadelphia, who joined the British when they took possession of the city, who had been long at enmity with Mr. Dickinson, and who had differed from both of them in political sentiments.

When military movements were first made, Mr. Wilson, then resident in Carlisle, was chosen colonel of a regiment of militia, raised in the county of Cumberland. He acted in that capacity when occasions demanded his services, and the public stores and magazines in Carlisle were committed to his charge; but he was never in active service, owing, probably, to his very frequent civil appointments. He was, also, a commissioner to treat with the Indians, a duty which he executed successfully.

Notwithstanding the opposition which Mr. Wilson had encountered, when proposed as a delegate to the first continen-

tal congress, which met in September, 1774, he was, on the sixth of May, 1775, together with Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Willing, added to the Pennsylvania delegation, by the unanimous voice of the assembly, and accordingly took his seat in the second congress, which met at Philadelphia, on the tenth of May, 1775. To this honourable and distinguished station he was successively re-appointed, on the third of November, 1775, the twentieth of July, 1776, and the tenth of March, 1777.

At a meeting of the general assembly, held on the fourteenth of September, 1777, the house resumed the consideration of the choosing new delegates to serve the state in congress, when it was resolved, that new delegates "be immediately elected instead of Jonathan B. Smith, esquire, who has resigned, and of James Wilson and George Clymer, esquires, *who are hereby superseded.*" Their places were accordingly supplied by Joseph Reed, William Clingan, and Dr. Samuel Duffield. Thus early did the spirit of party deprive our country of the active services of its best and most efficient advocates. So early as the month of January preceding, Mr. Wilson was apprised by his friend, Robert Morris, of the plan in agitation to remove him from office. In a letter, dated the thirty-first of that month, Mr. Morris makes the following remarks; "I am told our assembly do not intend you shall be in the new list of delegates. I am too busy to attend, or I would contest the matter warmly; although I well know, that the honesty, merits, and ability which you possess in so eminent a degree, would not be sufficient pleas against the previous determination of a strong party; for that, I am told, is the case. However, you will enjoy your family and friends at home, if you are deprived of the opportunity of continuing those services to your country, which she so much needs, and which, if I mistake not, she

will feel the want of, until better men, in better times, shall call you forth again." Thus, in consequence of the ascendency of the party opposed to him, Mr. Wilson retired, for a season, from public life.

But his talents were too splendid and useful to be permitted long to remain in political obscurity; and in the year 1782, he received the most distinguished evidences, that consistency and integrity will finally prevail over the machinations of faction. On the twelfth of November, of that year, he was re-elected to congress, and took his seat in that body, on the second of January, 1783. In the preceding month of June, he was appointed by the president and supreme executive council, in conjunction with William Bradford junior, Joseph Reed, and Jonathan D. Sergeant, a counsellor and agent for Pennsylvania, in the controversy subsisting between that state and Connecticut, relative to the settlement at Wyoming. The court of commissioners appointed to hear, and finally determine this important dispute, was held at Trenton, on the twefth of November, 1782, and on the thirtieth of December, pronounced their unanimous opinion, that the state of Connecticut had no right to the lands in controversy, and that the jurisdiction and pre-emption of all the territory lying within the charter boundary of Pennsylvania, and then claimed by the state of Connecticut, did of right belong to the state of Pennsylvania. The successful result of this cause, may, in some degree, be attributed to the luminous and learned argument of Mr. Wilson, the delivery of which occupied several days. He was again appointed a delegate to congress, on the seventh of April, 1785, and attended on the twenty-sixth of the same month; and finally, on the eleventh of the succeeding month of November, resuming his honourable station on the twenty-second of March, 1786.

During the period of his absence from the great national council, he received frequent marks of the unabated confidence reposed in him, by those who were elevated above the influence of state or party feuds. On the fifth of June, 1779, M. Gerard, minister plenipotentiary of France, appointed Mr. Wilson advocate general of the French nation, in the United States. "The daily discussions," says the commission, "which arise in the different parts of United America, relative to commerce and navigation, and the establishment of fixed regulations on those subjects, forming an object of great labour and importance, which can only be confided to a person versed in the laws, and internal administration of America, as well as in the rights of man, and the general usages of commerce; and the experience and talents of which Mr. James Wilson has afforded so many brilliant proofs, making him worthy of this nomination, we hereby appoint and constitute him, subject to the good pleasure of the king, and until his decision be known, advocate general of the French nation, in the thirteen United States." The French minister notified congress of this appointment, on the fifteenth of September, 1779, and on the eighteenth of February, 1781, the king of France issued letters-patent confirming it under his hand, "in consideration of the zeal and attachment which he had, on various occasions, shown towards the subjects of his majesty."

The attention of Mr. Wilson was, for some time, closely directed to the arduous duties of his office, and in forming plans relative to the commercial connexions of the United States with France. These duties were of very great extent and importance; and attended with no small degree of difficulty and delicacy. By the treaty of commerce between France and the United States, the functions of consuls, vice-consuls, agents, and commissaries, were to be regulated by a

particular agreement; and it became the duty of the advocate general to draw the sketch of a plan for this agreement, on the part of France. In other countries, usage and rules previously established, greatly assisted in ascertaining the functions, powers, and privileges of public officers: but, in the United States, every thing of that nature was new and unprecedented. "I fancy myself," said Mr. Wilson, "in the situation of a planter, who undertakes to settle and cultivate a farm in the woods, where there has not been one tree cut down, nor a single improvement made." While the colonies were dependent on the crown of Great Britain, it was the policy of that nation to confine their commerce to herself; and their trade and navigation were regulated by the laws of England. But a very different, and a much nobler prospect, unfolded itself to the view, when Mr. Wilson entered on the duties of his office. The arrangements of commerce would necessarily expand with their objects; and those respecting the trade with France made a capital figure in the general system. In order to model and digest them, as the magnitude of the subject required, it was necessary accurately to know and to compare the laws of nations, the laws of France, and the laws, customs, and interior police of the United States. From such comparison, a system of regulations, accommodated, as far as practicable, to the maxims, manners, and views of both nations would naturally be formed. "A close study of the laws of England," he remarks in a letter to Mr. Holker, on this subject, "and of this country, for upwards of thirteen years, and an extensive practice during the greatest part of that period, entitle me to say, that I am not altogether unacquainted with them. I have given attention to the laws of nations. Since I have been honoured with the nomination to be advocate general, I have directed my studies to the laws and ordinances of France; but I am very defi-

cient in the knowledge of them. Nothing but intense application, for a considerable time, can make me so much master of them, as to do justice to the office, or to derive reputation from it to myself. As the trade of France with the United States shall increase, the number of processes, in which the kingdom will be interested, and of cases in which law opinions must be given, will increase in proportion. To give a safe opinion upon any particular point, however simple or detached it may appear, requires a general knowledge of the laws, from which it ought to be deduced. It is obvious, that I must relinquish a very great share of my practice, (which you know to be valuable, and which cannot be soon, or easily regained, after it is once given up.) and must render that, to which I shall confine myself, entirely subordinate to the discharge of my office." In accordance with his duty, Mr. Wilson, in the beginning of 1780, submitted to the minister plenipotentiary, for his inspection and transmission to France, a draught of a general plan concerning the function of consuls, and the jurisdiction and proceedings of courts, in commercial causes, in which the subjects of that country were parties. "It has many imperfections," said he; "but imperfect as it is, it has cost me much time and thought. In a performance of this kind, the labour appears less from what is adopted, than from what is, upon reflection, laid aside." It was stipulated by Mr. Wilson with M. Gerard, on his acceptance of the office, that an annual salary should be annexed to it; and upon that principle, the nomination, which would otherwise have been refused, was accepted. This contract was extremely just, as an equivalent for the necessary abandonment of a large portion of his lucrative practice. Moreover, he declared, that he would never consent to transact such business, as the minister, or consuls, of France might choose to lay before him, keep an account of it, and make a charge for the several

services. He maintained, that it would place him under the obligation of acquiring the knowledge necessary for the discharge of his office, and under the inconvenience of holding himself always ready at the call of the ministers and consuls, and, at the same time, would leave it wholly in their power, whether he should derive any or no advantage from his studies and attention. "It would, in other respects," said he, in a letter to M. Gerard, "reduce me to a degree of dependence, to which I will not submit. You know my sentiment from the beginning was, that my salary and my commissions should be dependent only on the king. If I was to accept of the office on terms less sure and respectable, I should think myself unworthy of the trust involved in it; and could not expect to render that service, of which I should otherwise be capable." After a long, and on the part of France a shuffling, correspondence on the subject, the duke De Luzerne informed Mr. Wilson, in April, 1782, that the king did not intend to attach an annual salary to the office of advocate general of the nation. This violation of the original compact decided the proper course to be pursued; he immediately addressed a letter to the French minister, in which he stated that he would not have accepted the office, but upon the terms that a salary should be annexed to it; that as it was determined that such should not be the case, he could no longer divert so much of his study and attention from the practice of the law, as he had done for a considerable time." "But, sir," he continues, "I am a citizen of the United States, and feel what I owe to France. While the king is making such generous, and such expensive efforts in behalf of my country, every service, of which my situation and circumstances will admit, is due to him. With the greatest cheerfulness, therefore, I will, during the war, give my best advice and assistance, in the line of my profession and practice, concerning

such matters as the ministers and consuls of France will do me the honour of laying before me." Finally, after several years of labour, Mr. Wilson received from his most christian majesty, in November, 1783, the princely remuneration of—ten thousand livres.

Congress also appointed him, on the thirty-first of December, 1781, during his absence from that body, one of the directors of the bank of North America, planned by Mr. Morris for the purpose of supporting the finances of the United States.

Whilst Mr. Wilson was in congress, he was considered as one of its ablest members, and was, perhaps, more engaged in the business of committees, than any of his colleagues. His political standing was deservedly high, and he was always listened to with respectful attention. He particularly distinguished himself in all those weighty questions, which were agitated in that important crisis, when the settlement of our affairs, both civil and military, commanded the most serious and anxious attention. In June, 1775, he was of the committee which prepared an eloquent and nervous appeal to the assembly of Jamaica; and in July of the same year, when the Indians were divided into three departments, the northern, middle, and southern, and commissioners appointed by congress to superintend Indian affairs in behalf of the colonies, he was elected a commissioner for the middle department. He was also a member of the several committees, to take into consideration the state of the colonies, and report what number of forces would be necessary for their defence; to prepare a letter to the inhabitants of Canada; to prepare an address to the united colonies; to take into consideration the state of the Indians in the middle department; to consider on the most speedy and effectual means for supporting the American cause in Canada; to confer

with general Washington, and concert a plan of military operations; to devise ways and means for supplying the treasury; to form an effectual plan for suppressing the internal enemies of America; to devise and execute measures for effectally re-enforcing general Washington, and obstructing the progress of general Howe's army; to take into consideration the state of the army; to explain to the several states, the reasons which induced congress to enlarge the powers of general Washington; to consider what steps were necessary to be taken, should the enemy attempt to penetrate through New Jersey, or to attack Philadelphia; to devise a plan for encouraging the Hessians, and other foreigners, employed by the king of Great Britain, and sent to America for the purpose of subjecting the states, to quit that iniquitous service; &c. &c. &c. He was a member of the standing committee for Indian affairs, and of the standing committee appointed to hear and determine upon appeals brought against sentences passed on libels, in the courts of admiralty in their respective states. He was also attached to the first board of war. In fact, no member was more frequently called upon to exert his talents, and no member exhibited more industry, capacity, and perseverance, in obeying the calls of duty, than James Wilson.

But, notwithstanding these active exertions in the cause of this country, Mr. Wilson became much involved in the political quarrels of the day. The principal charge on which those who opposed him relied, was his opposition to the Declaration of Independence. This accusation requires a particular examination; and its refutation will, at the same time, serve to exhibit, in its true light, the patriotism by which all the proceedings of Mr. Wilson were guided during the tempestuous scenes of the revolution. The following extract of a letter from Robert Whitehill, a member of the legislature

of Pennsylvania, to George Stevenson, written on the tenth of June, 1776, may afford an example of the assaults made, at that important period, on the reputation of Mr. Wilson: —"My feelings for myself, and the peace and safety of my distressed country, call me out to the unpleasing discovery I must at last make to you, of what I have too long concealed from you. I shall proceed to inform you, that a gentleman in Philadelphia, asked a delegate of congress, eighth June, how the debates on independence prospered in congress? Go, said he, and ask your friends Dickinson and Wilson;—with indignation you may think. The gentleman, ninth June, asked another delegate, how colonel Wilson behaved in congress on the debate about independence, and was answered, 'colonel Wilson formally complained of being bound by instructions contrary to his judgment: I expected yesterday,' said he, 'to have heard him alter his tone, as his instructions were rescinded. But I must say no more. I will never trust a Scotchman again. They cannot be honest when liberty is in question. Your conference of committees must appoint new delegates, or your province will be ruined. I heard, sir, a speech from Dickinson, in the house, seventh June, which confirms me in opinion, that we are sold by our delegates. He pledged himself to his honour, Mr. Allen, and the house, that he, with the other delegates of this colony, would vote against independence at all events.'—I leave you, sir, to make your own comments on the foregoing; and desire for my country's sake, you will inform your acquaintance of what I have here communicated to you, and if the people are still unbelieving, I can prove it so far as I have gone; and our friend in congress from your county, must be better known yet. Mr. Miller is much to blame for his conduct before the last election; he certainly knew of Wilson's charge, or rather the charge against Wilson, being too well founded;

as I am exceedingly well informed, by a certain gentleman, who used freedom with Mr. Miller on the occasion, that he might undeceive him before the election, as said gentleman was afraid of Wilson being chosen a representative, and was desirous to prevent it if possible."

Now, in lieu of 'a gentleman,' 'a delegate,' 'the gentleman,' 'another delegate,' 'our friend,' 'a certain gentleman,' and 'said gentleman,' who together with Mr. Robert Whitehill, constitute the credible and well defined witnesses against the political integrity of Mr. Wilson, we have it in our power to produce, under their proper names, such evidences as will not only prove the falsity of the letter, but put the question with regard to Mr. Wilson's conduct, touching the Declaration of Independence, for ever at rest. Bishop White, in answer to the question, "Whether Mr. Wilson was opposed to independence?" replied: "Doubtless, Mr. Wilson voted for independence, although his being reconciled to the measure, as was the case with the best men finally favouring it, was gradual, and as was made necessary by existing circumstances. From the political character of the writer of the letter, I suppose him to have been one of those who would have been mortified by any measure of Great Britain, that might have eventuated in an honourable reconciliation." "I do not hesitate to say," says judge Peters, "that this letter contains a base slander, propagated for party purposes. Mr. Wilson never was opposed to our independence, when, like many others of the best friends to our country, he found it inevitably necessary. The time and manner created some differences of opinions, but the measure, when adopted, had universal approbation; I mean of the *whigs*, however divided in local and subordinate matters." Governor M'Kean, in a letter to the late Alexander James Dallas, relative to the declaration of independence, observes, "The delegates for

Pennsylvania, who voted in the negative, were John Dickinson, Robert Morris, Charles Humphreys, and Thomas Willing, those in the affirmative, were John Morton, Benjamin Franklin, and James Wilson." Judge Duncan states it as "an undoubted fact, that on the first question concerning independence, the only delegates of Pennsylvania for it, were Mr. Wilson and Mr. Morton, although others of them concurred afterwards."

The history of the rise and progress of that important measure is simply this: a declaration of independence was scarcely spoken of until about eight or nine months previous to the fourth of July, 1776; and would have been impracticable had healing measures been adopted in parliament in the preceding winter. In proportion as the designs of that body became developed, the minds of the best friends of the country were awakened to the unwelcome fact that there remained no middle course between independence and unconditional submission. It is evident, that in such a posture of affairs, some must have been earlier and some later, in their convictions, before the crisis calling for determination. Hence, even if Mr. Wilson were to be classed with the latter, (with Morris, Dickinson, Read, and other eminent men,) it would be no impeachment of his patriotism: on the contrary, in the estimation of prudent men, it might have made him more to be relied on. The first motion respecting independence, was made on the seventh of June, 1776, and the consideration of it referred till the next day, when congress resolved itself into a committee of the whole, and after taking the matter into consideration, it was again postponed until Monday, the tenth of June. Nothing appears indicative of the sense of congress, before that day. The ninth of June, being Sunday, the house did not meet. Now, the eighth and ninth are the days noticed in Whitehill's letter as having

sealed the political apostasy of Mr. Wilson. In any case, it is evident to the unbiassed observer, that the vote of any member, on the question of reference to a day so near, could not have been decisive of his sense as to the projected measure: he might have thought, in a matter of so much importance, that a longer postponement was eligible; and this, of itself, would have been sufficient for his condemnation in the opinion of an enragé. On the tenth, a resolution was offered, "That these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown; and that all political connexion between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." The consideration of this resolution was postponed to the first day of July; and, in the mean while, that no time might be lost, in case congress should agree thereto, a committee was appointed to prepare a synonymous declaration. This committee consisted of Messrs. Jefferson, J. Adams, Franklin, Sherman, and R. R. Livingston.—On Monday, the first of July, the question was taken in a committee of the whole. All the states voted in favour of the declaration excepting Pennsylvania and Delaware. We have already stated the majority of four to three, among the delegates from the former state. Delaware was divided: Thomas M'Kean was in favour of, and George Read opposed to the measure. The report of a declaration was postponed, from day to day, till the fourth of July. It was a rainy day, and Messrs. Morris and Dickinson were absent: hence the vote of Pennsylvania was given in favour of independence, Messrs. Wilson, Franklin and Morton, being in the affirmative, and Messrs. Humphreys and Willing in the negative. The opportune arrival of Cæsar Rodney, from Delaware, for whom an express had been despatched by Mr. M'Kean, and who voted for independence, secured the support of that

state; so that, on that day, there was an unanimous vote of the thirteen colonies in its favour. Unanimity, a very important point, was thus obtained: the dissension of a single state might have produced dangerous consequences. It may be proper, in this place, to notice a fact not generally known. In the printed public journal of congress for 1776, it would appear that the Declaration of Independence was signed on the fourth of July, by the members whose names are there inserted. But such was not the case: no person signed it on that day, nor for many days after; and among the names subscribed, one was opposed to it, and seven were not in congress at the time; while the names of Thomas M'Kean, of Delaware, and, as has been already remarked, Henry Wisner, of New York, are not printed as subscribers, although both were present, and voted for independence.

Thus, in the whole course of the proceedings of which we have any knowledge, we find that Mr. Wilson uniformly voted in favour of independence; on the first of July, in opposition to the majority of his colleagues, and on the fourth, in the majority. But many sincere whigs considered a separation from the mother country, at that time, as one of the greatest evils that could befall us. Of this class was Mr. John Dickinson, who was always timid and hesitating, though sincerely attached to our cause. Mr. Wilson, who was bold and decided, could only have been coupled with him, in the excommunication of Whitehill, to serve party or personal purposes. Dickinson was a prominent man: by his Farmer's Letters, he had acquired a high reputation, both for patriotism and ability; but being a disapprover of independence, he fell under a cloud, which obscured him all the war, and even involved him in the suspicion of disaffection. The writer of the letter, accusing Mr. Wilson of the blackest corruption, belonged to a junto of certain violent

politicians, who intemperately pressed the measure of independence before the public mind, either in or out of congress, was prepared for it. The demagogues of that day were opposed to bridling and breaking popular extravagancies; and of course, to all who wished a well-regulated, popular government. One of them was heard to say, by a venerable survivor of the revolution, that "men of education and learning should have no rule, in a democratic system; they always did mischief, by introducing checks on the natural impulses of the people." James Cannon, a school-master, who was very much of a pedagogue, and who was confederated with Whitehill and his fraternity, abused, in addressing a public meeting of a mixed complexion, "all learning, as an artificial constraint on the human understanding: he had done with it; and advised our sovereign lords, the people, to choose no *lawyers*, or other professional characters, called educated, or learned; but to select men uneducated, with unsophisticated understandings. *He* should be glad to forget the *trumpery* which had occupied so much of his life." We may now judge to what lengths those who deluded the mass of the people, carried their disgusting and mischievous hypocrisies; as well as the reason why Mr. Robert Whitehill wished Mr. Wilson removed from popular favour. But the actors in those disgraceful scenes have passed away from the memory of man, while the names and virtues of the calumniated, shall descend to posterity, as imperishable as the record of their country's independence.

Towards the close of the year 1777, a combination was formed against the commander in chief, in which several members of congress, and a very few of the officers of the army, are believed to have entered. The splendour with which the late capitulation of Saratoga had surrounded the military reputation of general Gates, acquired some advocates

for the opinion, that the arms of America would be more fortunate, by the elevation of that gentleman to the supreme command; and some parts of the conduct of that officer showed, that if this opinion did not originate with him, he was not among the last to adopt it. He carried on a correspondence with general Conway, one of the most malignant partizans of the cabal, and pronounced by Washington to have been "a dangerous incendiary," in which the French officer observed, "heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak general, and bad counsellors, would have ruined it." At the same time, the legislature of Pennsylvania, chagrined at losing its capital, remonstrated against the intention of general Washington to move into winter-quarters in terms very intelligibly manifesting their dissatisfaction with the commander in chief; a new and unfriendly board of war was created, of which general Gates, his rival, (if such a term be not heretical,) was appointed the president; his calumniator, general Conway, was made inspector general, and elevated above brigadiers older than himself, to the rank of major-general; and attempts were made, by anonymous communications, to alienate the affections of the leading political characters in the states, from the commander in chief. But it was impossible to loosen the hold which he had taken, of the affections and confidence of the army, and of the nation. No better evidence of its strength can be given, than the indignation with which the idea of such a change was received, even by the victorious troops, who had fought and conquered under Gates. Even the northern army clung to Washington, as the saviour of their country; and fortunately for America, the only effect of these combinations was to excite a great degree of resentment, which was directed entirely against those believed to be engaged in them. General Gates fell under a cloud, whose obscurity

was heightened by the disastrous battle of Camden; and major general Conway, after having exhibited conspicuous proofs of his cowardice at the battle of Germantown, by seeking refuge in a farm-house, and refusing to join his brigade which was engaged with the enemy, entertaining no hope of being called on to exercise the functions of his new office of inspector general, and finding his situation in the army as uncomfortable as the scorn of honourable men could render it, tendered the resignation of his commission to congress, on the twenty-eighth of April, 1778, which was accepted with the dissenting vote of Virginia alone. After his resignation he frequently indulged in expressions, manifesting the hostility of his temper to the commander in chief; for which he was challenged by general John Cadwalader, with whom he had some altercation; received a wound, for some time believed to be mortal; and, despairing of recovery, and considering himself on the bed of death, made all the atonement in his power to the great man whom he had vainly endeavoured to defame, by a solemn recantation of his former opinions. He, however, recovered, and soon after went to France.

From the commencement of the revolution to the termination of his life, an event which occurred about a year before the death of general Washington, Mr. Wilson was considered by all those who knew him best, as one of the most decided friends, and enthusiastic admirers, of that illustrious man. Great, then, was the astonishment of his surviving relatives and friends, and of all those who had been taught to form a different opinion of the political character of Mr. Wilson, to find from the following paragraphs in the "Life of general Greene," published in 1822, the first intimation that he was attached to the cabal opposed to general Washington, in 1777 and 1778. "Yet certain it is, that at that time, he

(Washington) had enemies; and among them were ranked Samuel Adams; the Lees of Virginia; *Wilson of Pennsylvania*, and some minor characters." (*vol. i. p.* 154.) "The ascendency of such men as Samuel Adams and Richard Henry Lee could not but be felt; and Mifflin and *Wilson, leading men in Pennsylvania*, were both *avowedly hostile* to him." (*Ibid. p.* 166.)

This charge is wholly unfounded. We contemplate, with indignation, all attempts to affix stains on the reputation of the worthy men who, in the several capacities in which they were engaged, achieved the great event on which are founded all the prosperity and happiness of our country. Passions and prejudices, both personal and local, they certainly possessed,—for they were men; but they may be safely acquitted of any charge of indulging such prejudices or passions, when the great object in view required the sacrifice of private disagreements, or personal jealousies. So far as these observations apply to Mr. Wilson, he was as much exempted from personal animosities as any of his co-agents in the revolutionary struggle. There is a pernicious vanity in some historiographers, which excites them to rake up wonderful discoveries, both in relation to persons and circumstances, by which they expect to distinguish themselves. Mr. Wilson had enemies, as well as many others who were prominent in our revolutionary war. By some of these, or from documentary misrepresentations, the false imputation on his character, adopted by judge Johnson, (the author of the book) was probably promulgated. Is it not absurd to suppose that Mr. Wilson could have been "avowedly hostile" to general Washington, and yet that this should be unknown even to his most intimate friends? Can we attach credit to the charge, when those friends, without exception, always believed him to be a uniform and sincere admirer of the general? Be-

sides, Mr. Wilson was not, at the period referred to, in public life, but pursuing his professional duties at Carlisle. Nor, with a single exception, was he on terms of intimacy with those supposed to be engaged in the combination against the commander in chief: with some of them, indeed, he was on terms very far from friendly or intimate. "I know the charge," said Mr. Richard Peters, "to be groundless and utterly false. I have had numberless conversations with him on our public men, and public measures, in all the stages both of our difficulties and triumphs. He was always the eulogist and admirer of general Washington; and indignantly affected when any thing was said or done, to sully his character or conduct. So far from being a leader of malcontents on this subject, I know he sincerely and warmly reprobated the jealousies and discontents of some who disgraced themselves by indulging them. The anti-Washingtonian malignities by which they exposed themselves, were offensive to every liberal mind; and to none more than to Mr. Wilson. Strange then, that he should be charged with being a *leader* in a junto, whose sentiments he despised." If general Washington entertained an opinion that he was one of the faction which laboured to injure the cause by depriving him of his rank, would he have created him one of the first associate judges of the supreme court, appointed under the federal constitution? Or would he, as was the case, have unhesitatingly overruled the intention expressed by his nephew, Bushrod Washington, of not entering the office of Mr. Wilson for the purpose of prosecuting his legal studies, by arguments strongly indicating the high opinion he entertained of him?

We have entered on this subject, to do justice to one who stood high in the councils of his country, and in the esteem and confidence of his fellow citizens: we desired, in the same public manner in which it was advanced, to clear his charac-

ter from a censure, which was entirely unmerited. We cannot believe that judge Johnson designedly misrepresented his character and principles, however we may regret the incorrect information on which his statement was founded: nor is it to be forgotten that had not some near, and deeply interested relative been living, the imputation might have descended to posterity, a lasting blemish on the character of Mr. Wilson. The prompt and feeling manner in which the author expressed his regret for the error which he had committed, and the immediate means which he employed to correct it, are the best proofs of his desire to atone for the inadvertency into which he was led.

In the year 1779, the lives of Mr. Wilson and many of his friends were put in extreme hazard by a band of heated partisans, under the pretext of his holding sentiments inimical to popular institutions. By that time, party spirit in Pennsylvania had taken a consistency, and the politicians were divided into constitutionalists and republicans. The first rallied round the constitution already formed, which was reprobated by the others, for its total deficiency in checks, and counterbalancing powers, thence tending, as it was alleged, to rash, precipitate, and oppressive proceedings: the term *republicans* was embraced, as recognizing the principles of the revolution, and as indicative, perhaps, of tenets, which admitted the utility of modifications and restraints, in a system resting upon the broad basis of general suffrage and popular sovereignty. Mr. Wilson was one of the leading men of the republican party, who agreed that they would not accept of any office or appointment under the constitution, which, in that case, they would be bound, by an oath, to support. This circumstance offended, and inflamed, the constitutional party, and with other exciting causes, however unjust, led to the outrage which we are about to record. The

consequences of a rapidly depreciating currency were very distressing to many, who were incapable of tracing them to their cause: for example, every tradesman who had engaged in a piece of work, felt, when paid for it, that he did not receive, except in name, what he had contracted for. Artful and designing incendiaries had the address to persuade many of the sufferers, that the evil was owing to the merchants, who monopolised the goods; and to certain lawyers, who rescued the tories from punishment, by pleading for them in court. Mr. Wilson had become particularly obnoxious. Sydney and Russel were uniformly celebrated as patriots, until the advocates of arbitrary power held them up as pensioners to France. He was charged, in his professional character, with defending and patronising tories, and befriending the foes to the principles on which the opposition to the arbitrary claims of the British administration was founded. Yet he was, in fact, a most decided friend of a popular government, and mainly assisted in every measure calculated for its establishment. The affair of "fort Wilson," as his house was thereafter denominated, flowed from this mistaken opinion, of which those who concocted that disgraceful transaction took advantage, for party purposes.

About the middle of September, 1779, a committee, appointed at a town meeting, regulated the prices of rum, salt, sugar, coffee, flour, &c. a measure which was strongly opposed by the importers. Robert Morris, Blair M'Clenachan, John Willcocks, and a number of other stanch whigs, had a quantity of these articles in their stores, which they refused to dispose of, at the regulated prices. About the last of the month, a great number of the lower class from the city and liberties, collected and marched through the city, threatening to break open the stores, distribute the goods, and punish those who refused to open their warehouses. On the morning

of the fourth of October, placards were posted, menacing Robert Morris, Blair M'Clenachan, and many others: Mr. Wilson was proscribed by the mobility, for having exercised his professional duty as a lawyer, in behalf of certain persons who had been prosecuted for treason; and the punishment decreed for this crime, was banishment to the enemy, yet in New York. But this was not the real cause which produced so lamentable an instance of popular delusion: *that* was to be found in the superior talents and respectability of the republican party.

The gentlemen threatened, determined to defend themselves, and with a number of their friends, to the amount of about thirty or forty, took post at the south-west corner of Walnut and Third streets, in a house belonging to, and occupied by Mr. Wilson: it was then a large, old fashioned, brick building, with an extensive garden on Third, and on Walnut streets. They were provided with arms, but their stock of ammunition was very small. While the mob was marching down, general Nichols and Daniel Clymer proceeded hastily to the arsenal, at Carpenter's Hall, and filled their pockets with cartridges: this constituted their whole supply.

In the mean time, the mob and militia, for no regular troops took part in the riot, assembled on the commons, while a meeting of the principal citizens took place at the coffee house. A deputation was sent to endeavour to prevail on them to disperse, but without effect. The first troop of city cavalry, being apprised of what was going foward, and anxious for the safety of their fellow-citizens, assembled at their stables, a fixed place of rendezvous, and agreed to have their horses saddled, and ready to mount, at a moment's warning. Notice was to be given to as many members as could be found; and a part was to assemble in Dock, below Second, street,

and join the party at the stables. For a time a deceitful calm prevailed at the hour of dinner, the members of the troop retired to their respective homes, and the rioters seized the opportunity to march into the city. The armed men amounted to two hundred, and were commanded by Mills, a North Carolina captain; Faulkner, a ship-joiner; Pickering, a tailor; and one Bonham, a man of low character: they marched to Mr. Wilson's house, with drums beating, and two pieces of cannon. They immediately commenced firing on the house, which was warmly returned by the garrison. Finding they could make no impression, the mob procured from a blacksmith's shop in the neighbourhood, a crow-bar and sledge, and proceeded to force the door. At the critical moment when the door yielded to their efforts, the troops made their appearance: the cry of "the horse! the horse!" was raised; the rioters, ignorant of their numbers, dispersed in every direction; but not before two other detachments of the first troop had reached the scene. Many of them were arrested, delivered to the civil authority, and committed to prison; and as the sword was very freely used, a considerable number was severely wounded. One man and one boy were killed in the streets; in the house, captain Campbell was killed, and Mr. Mifflin and Mr. Samuel C. Morris were wounded. The troop patroled the streets, the greater part of the night. The citizens turned out en masse; and placed a guard at the powder magazine and the arsenal. It was some days before order was restored; and the troop, from the part they had taken, found it necessary to keep much together, and hold themselves in readiness to act in support of each other. Major Lennox was particularly marked out for destruction. He retired to his house at Germantown. The mob followed, and surrounded it during the night, and prepared to force an entrance. Anxious to gain time, he

pledged his honour, that he would open the door as soon as day-light appeared. In the mean time, he contrived to despatch an intrepid woman, who lived in his family, to the city, for assistance; and a party of the first troop arrived in season to protect their comrade: but he was compelled to return to town for safety. He was, for a number of years, saluted, in the market, by the title of "brother butcher," owing, in part, to his having been without a coat on the day of the riot: having on a long coat, he was obliged to cast it aside, to prevent being dragged from his horse.

The gentlemen who had comprised the garrison, were advised to leave the city, where their lives were endangered. General Mifflin, and about thirty others, accordingly met at Mr. Gray's house, near the lower ferry on Schuylkill, where a council was called, and it was resolved to return to town, without any appearance of intimidation. But it was deemed expedient that Mr. Wilson should absent himself for a time: the others continued to walk as usual in public, and attended the funeral of the unfortunate captain Campbell.

Thus ended this disgraceful affair. Had it not been for the spirited, prompt, and energetic conduct of the first troop, the lives of many very valuable citizens, and genuine whigs, would have been sacrificed, and an indelible disgrace entailed upon the city of Philadelphia. It was generally believed, at that time, that the mob had been instigated by certain secret political enemies to the gentlemen in the house, who were attached to the republican party. Some alleged that individuals high in office excited the tumult; but this is not to be accredited. Others thought, with more reason, that the disorder was suffered to proceed to a certain length, under the belief that a seasonable stop could be put to it; and with the prospect of being applied to for protection by the gentlemen in danger, who were the political enemies of those

in power: whether the latter ought to have interfered without application, or whether the former ought to have made it, are questions which it is now needless to decide on. It appears to be certain, that those who attacked the house belonged to the constitutional party; and the constitutional society, on the eighth of October, made a collection for the wounded, and the families of the killed. Prosecutions commenced on both sides, but were finally quashed. The general assembly, or what was the same thing, the constitutional party, on the tenth of October, 1779, presented the thanks of the house to his excellency, the president of the state, for his "spirited and prudent conduct on that unhappy occasion;" and on the thirteenth of March, 1780, passed an act of oblivion, granting a free and general pardon for the offences committed on the fourth of October.

On the twenty-fifth of May, 1787, being the first day on which a sufficient number of members appeared to constitute a representation of a majority of the states, Mr. Wilson attended as a delegate from Pennsylvania, to the convention which then assembled in Philadelphia, for the purpose of forming the constitution of the United States. A surviving member of that body observes, that, "in his opinion, the most able and useful members of it, were James Wilson and James Madison; that he is in doubt which of these deserved the preference, but was inclined to give it to the former. It is also said, that general Washington expressed a high opinion of the merits and services of Mr. Wilson in that convention. Being a fluent speaker, and possessing deep political sagacity and foresight, he entered almost daily, during the long deliberations of the convention, into the arguments which arose on the great and important points, necessarily involved in the formation of a new and adequate system of government. He particularly insisted, in the course of the debates, that the

national legislature ought not to be appointed by the state legislatures; but that the national legislative powers ought to flow immediately from the people, so as to contain all their understanding, and to be an exact transcript of their minds; that the state governments ought to be preserved, because the freedom of the people, and their internal good police, depended on their existence in full vigour, but that such a government could only answer local purposes, and that it was impossible that a general government, as despotic as even that of the Roman emperors, could be adequate to the government of the whole, without this distinction. To the argument that each state, according to a confederation, ought to have an equal vote, Mr. Wilson was decidedly opposed. He observed that a majority, nay, even a minority of the states, had a right to confederate with each other, and the rest might do as they thought best. He considered numbers as the best criterion to determine representation; and that it would be unjust to permit a small state to have the same right and influence in the councils of the nations as a large one. I never, said he, will confederate on this plan. If no state will part with any of its sovereignty, it is in vain to talk of a national government. The state which has five times the number of inhabitants, ought, nay, must have the same proportion of weight in the representation. If there was a probability of equalizing the states, he would support it. But we have no such power. If, however, we depart from the principle of representation in proportion to numbers, we will lose the object of our meeting. Inequality in representation poisons every government. The English courts are hitherto pure, just, and incorrupt, while their legislature is base and venal. The one arises from unjust representation, the other from their independence of the legislature. Lord Chesterfield remarks, that one of the states of the United Netherlands withheld its as-

sent to a proposition, until a major of their state was provided for: he needed not to have added, (for the conclusion was self-evident,) that it was one of the lesser states. I mean no reflection; but I leave it to gentlemen to consider whether this has not also been the case in congress? On the same subject, he remarked: "Confederations are usually of a short date. The Amphictyonic council was instituted in the infancy of the Grecian republics; as those grew in strength, the council lost its weight and power. The Achæan league met the same fate; Switzerland and Holland are supported in their confederation, not by its intrinsic merit, but the incumbent pressure of surrounding bodies. Germany is kept together by the house of Austria. True, congress carried us through the war, even against its own weakness. That powers were wanting, you, Mr. president, (Washington,) must have felt. To other causes, not to congress, must the success be ascribed. That the great states acceded to the confederation, and that they, in the hour of danger, made a sacrifice of their interest to the lesser states, is true. Like the wisdom of Solomon, in adjudging the child to its true mother, from tenderness to it, the greater states well knew that the loss of a limb was fatal to the confederation; they too, through tenderness, sacrificed their dearest rights to preserve the whole. But the time is come when justice will be done to their claims. Situations are altered." But it is impracticable to follow Mr. Wilson through the long and varied discussions, produced by the agitation of so many important questions, in which he generally took a conspicuous part. On the twenty-third of July, it was resolved, "That the proceedings of the convention for the establishment of a national government, except what respects the supreme executive, be referred to a committee for the purpose of reporting a constitution conformably to the proceedings aforesaid;" and on the next day, this

committee, called, in the journal, "the committee of detail," was appointed: it consisted of five members, Messrs. Wilson, Rutledge, Randolph, Gorham, and Elsworth; who, accordingly, on the sixth of August, 1787, reported the draught of a constitution.

Mr. Wilson was also one of the convention which ratified the federal constitution in behalf of the state of Pennsylvania; and as he was the only member of the general convention that had a seat in that of the state, he considered it his duty to prepare the way for their deliberations, by unfolding, in a long, learned, and powerful speech, the difficulties which the federal convention had to encounter; by pointing out the end which they proposed to accomplish; and by tracing the general principles which they had adopted for the accomplishment of that end.

On the sixth of October, he concluded a strong argument in favour of the ratification of the constitution, in the following decisive and energetic manner: "It is neither extraordinary nor unexpected, that the constitution offered to your consideration should meet with opposition. It is the nature of man to pursue his own interest, in preference to the public good; and I do not mean to make any personal reflection, when I add, that it is the interest of a very numerous, powerful, and respectable body to counteract and destroy the excellent work produced by the late convention. All the officers of government, and all the appointments for the administration of justice, and the collection of the public revenue, which are transferred from the individual to the aggregate sovereignty of the states, will necessarily turn the stream of influence and emolument into a new channel. Every person, therefore, who either enjoys, or expects to enjoy, a place of profit under the present establishment, will object to the proposed innovation; not, in truth, because it is injurious to the

liberties of his country, but because it affects his schemes of wealth and consequence. I will confess, indeed, that I am not a blind admirer of this plan of government, and that there are some parts of it which, if my wish had prevailed, would certainly have been altered. But, when I reflect how widely men differ in their opinions, and that every man (and the observation applies likewise to every state,) has an equal pretension to assert his own, I am satisfied that any thing nearer to perfection could not have been accomplished. If there are errors, it should be remembered, that the seeds of reformation are sown in the work itself, and the concurrence of two-thirds of the congress may, at any time, introduce alterations and amendments. Regarding it, then, in every point of view, with a candid and disinterested mind, I am bold to assert, that it is the BEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS EVER BEEN OFFERED TO THE WORLD."

On the fourth of July, 1788, Mr. Wilson was selected to deliver the oration, at the famous procession formed at Philadelphia, to celebrate the adoption of the constitution of the United States.

By the ratification of the federal constitution, the *constitutional* party of Pennsylvania was laid at the feet of the *republicans*, who, triumphing under the appellation of *federalists*, overwhelmed their adversaries with the short-lived odium of *anti-federalism*. A convention was now called for altering the constitution of the state of Pennsylvania, so as to render it more conformable to that of the United States. The discomfiture of the constitutionalists, who had opposed the adoption of the federal constitution, being complete, they made a virtue of necessity, and yielded, with a tolerably good grace, to the call of this convention : they considered it, and wisely too, as a mean of recovering their lost consequence ; and exerting themselves at the elections for members of it,

they contrived to take the field with a force not very inferior to that of their adversaries. This body was considered highly respectable for its abilities: among the men of note who were delegated to it, were Messrs. Wilson, M'Kean, Lewis, Ross, Addison, Sitgreaves, Pickering, Gallatin, Smilie, and Findley. The construction of the senate, or upper house of the legislature, was the point which excited most interest, and was, consequently, the subject of the warmest controversy in the convention. A committee, selected for the purpose, reported an outline of the constitution. When that part of the report, which recommended the choosing of senators, through the medium of electors, was under discussion, Mr. Wilson took the lead in opposition to it, and Mr. Lewis in support of it. It was urged by the latter, and his co-operators, that the senate should be so constituted, as to form a check upon the house of representatives; and, as in the proposed mode of creating it through the alembic of electors, it would be purged of the impurities of an immediate election by the people, the desideratum would be obtained; that, being chosen by a selected few, it would probably be more wise, more respectable, and more composed of men of wealth, than if chosen by the multitude; and hence it was inferred, that it would partake, in no inconsiderable degree, of the proper qualities of an upper house. As to Mr. Wilson's scheme, (for he had moved a substitute,) of choosing the senators in the same manner as the representatives, with the exception only of larger election districts, it was reprobated as doing away every purpose of a divided legislature; since the individuals composing the two houses would then be precisely of the same character, and too homogeneous to operate as correctives of each other. Mr. Wilson, in defence of his plan, maintained, that the circumstance of their different spheres of election would make the two bodies sufficient

checks upon each other; as well as their sitting in two chambers, which would produce an esprit-du-corps in each; and their being chosen for different periods, the representatives for one year, the senators for four years. He, moreover, urged, that electors would open a door to unfair practice and intrigue; that the senators should be as much favourites of the people as the representatives, and be inspired with equal confidence, by equally feeling themselves their choice.

As the debate seemed to turn upon the idea, that this was a contest between the principles of democracy and aristocracy, and that great advantages would be gained to either that might prevail, a considerable degree of heat was engendered; and Wilson, hitherto deemed an aristocrat, a monarchist, and a despot, as all the federalists were, found his adherents on this occasion, with a few exceptions, on the anti-federal side of the house. His speech on this subject was replete with sound reasoning and eloquence, mingled with the keenest sarcasm. He drew, to be sure, a picture of a free citizen, in the act of disposing of his suffrage, not altogether answerable to the sad realities, which are found on the election ground. Royalty, with its most splendid regalia, was made to hide its diminished head. "What is the right of suffrage," he demanded, "which we now display, to be viewed, admired and enjoyed, by our constituents? Is it to go to an obscure tavern in an obscure corner of an obscure district, and to vote, amidst the fumes of spirituous liquors, for a justice of the peace? There, indeed," said he, "no lesson would probably be learned, but that of low vice; no example would probably be shown, but that of illiberal cunning. Is it even to choose the members of one part of a legislature, the patriotic counsels and efforts of which part are liable, at every moment, to be controlled and frustrated by the negatives of other powers, independent of the authority, and indifferent, perhaps unfriendly, to

the interests of the people? Of much higher import, of much more improving efficacy, is that right which is now the object of our contemplation. It is a right to choose, in large and respectable assemblies, all the legislative, and many of the executive officers of the government; it is a right to choose those who shall be invested with the authority, and with the confidence of the people, and who may employ that authority and that confidence for the noblest interests of the commonwealth, without the apprehension of disappointment or control. This, surely, must have a powerful tendency to open, to enlighten, to enlarge, and to exalt the mind. I cannot sufficiently express my own ideas of the dignity and value of this right. In real majesty, an independent and unbiassed elector stands superior to princes, addressed by the proudest titles, attended by the most magnificent retinues, and decorated with the most splendid regalia. His sovereignty is original; theirs is only derivative." After painting, in glowing colours, the influence, advantages, and importance of the rights of election, he comes to the conclusion, that the right of suffrage, properly understood, properly valued, properly cultivated, and properly exercised, is a rich mine of intelligence and patriotism; that it is an abundant source of the most rational, the most improving, and the most endearing, connexion among the citizens; and that it is a most powerful, and, at the same time, a most pleasing, bond of union between the citizens, and those whom they select for the different offices and departments of government.

In his animadversions on the probable characters of the electors, Mr. Wilson poured forth a flood of keen and irresistible satire: "Who," said he, "are those electors to be? Logicians sometimes describe the subjects of their profound lucubrations negatively, as well as positively. Let us bar-

row a hint from them on this occasion. Who are those electors *not* to be? 1. They will be such as the people will think not the fittest to represent them in the most numerous branch of the legislature; for no representatives can be electors. 2. They will be such as the people will think not the fittest for senators; for no elector can be a senator;—and therefore, the people will not choose those to be electors, whom they would wish to see in the senate. 3. They will be such as the governor *has* thought not the fittest for any office in the executive or judicial departments; for persons holding appointments in any of those departments cannot be electors. I was going to say, in the fourth place, that they will be such as will be thought not the fittest for any office under the executive department in future. But here, I find, I am mistaken. For they may hold offices the moment after their election of senators; and I will not assert it to be impossible, that they will acquire their qualifications for those offices, by their conduct in that election." *** "Among the numerous good qualities of the electors, we hope one will be—that they will be unsusceptible of intrigue or cabal among themselves. A second we hope, will be—that they will be inaccessible to the impressions of intrigue or cabal from others. A third, we hope, will be—that as the people, by choosing them electors, have intimated decently that they think *them* not the fittest persons to be senators, *they* will cultivate the same decent reserve, with regard to their brothers, their cousins, their other relations, their friends, their dependents, and their patrons."

The most able debaters in the convention, were Wilson and Lewis. Ross, Addison, Sitgreaves, and Gallatin, were comparatively young statesmen; though the three first acquitted themselves in a handsome manner, the latter did not venture beyond an isolated observation. Wilson was truly

great, but enthusiastically democratic. The symptoms of returning reason, evinced in the adoption of the federal constitution, had probably put him in good humour with the people, and made him more than ever in love with "free and independent man." By an animated speech, and captivating theory, in favour of a popular vote, he defeated the plan in contemplation, to choose the governor by electors, or some distillation from the general mass. Such facts prove the injustice of charging him with anti-democratical sentiments. In fine, the character of his eloquence, the weight of his reasoning, and his extensive and accurate knowledge of the science of government, made him one of the most prominent members of the convention. He was one of the committee to prepare the form of the constitution; and the task of drawing up that instrument devolved on him.

In October, 1789, Mr. Wilson was appointed, by president Washington, one of the first judges of the supreme court of the United States, under the present constitution. In the selection of persons for high judicial offices, Washington consulted public opinion, as well as intrinsic worth; and a high degree of character was blended with real talent. In a letter, written on the occasion to John Rutledge, he makes the following remarks: "Regarding the due administration of justice as the strongest cement of good government, I have considered the first organization of the judicial department as essential to the happiness of the people, and to the stability of the political system. Under this impression, it has been with me an invariable object of anxious solicitude, to select the fittest characters to expound the laws, and to dispense justice." At the head of a department, deemed by himself so important, he placed Mr. John Jay; and nominated, as associate justices, James Wilson of Pennsylvania, John Rutledge of South Carolina, William Cushing of Massachusetts,

Robert Harrison of Maryland, and John Blair of Virginia. Some of these gentlemen had filled the highest law offices in their respective states; and all of them had received distinguished marks of the public confidence. In this office, Mr. Wilson continued until his death, when he was succeeded by Bushrod Washington. His character and conduct on the bench, were very highly esteemed for integrity and ability, and his deportment towards the bar, and the parties, was dignified, gentlemanly, and conciliating.

In the year 1790, the law professorship in the college of Philadelphia was established; and Mr. Wilson was appointed the first professor. The extent of his plan of lectures rendered it impossible for him to go through his whole subject in one season: three courses were necessary for the purpose. His first course was delivered in the winter of 1790-91, and his second, in a great measure, in the following winter. In April, 1792, the college of Philadelphia and the university of Pennsylvania were, by an act of assembly, united into one institution, under the latter title. A law professorship was erected in the new seminary, and Mr. Wilson again appointed to fill the chair: but no lectures were delivered after the union. His lectures on law are included in his works, which were published in 1804, in three volumes octavo. These lectures have not met with general approbation, nor is their excellence altogether undisputed. Mr. Graydon particularly condemns the opinion, that the commentaries of Blackstone should be studied with caution, because he is heterodox in some of his ideas, and does not trace power to its genuine source; that is, "through its small and pure streams, up to the free and independent man." He also remarks that the insinuation with regard to Burke's want of integrity, and his "new creed," might as well have been omitted; "Mr. Wilson," he says, "was an able man,

and his eloquence as a speaker, singularly forcible and commanding; but when he undertakes to raise trophies to himself from the dispraise of such men as Blackstone and Burke, he engages in a task which may justly be termed a bold one." But if some of the principles, contained in his lectures, have been questioned, none deny that they are the work of a strong mind, developing extensive learning and deep reflection.

In March, 1791, the house of representatives of the general assembly of Pennsylvania resolved to appoint a person to revise and digest the laws of the commonwealth; to ascertain and determine, how far any British statutes extended to it; and to prepare bills, containing such alterations, additions, and improvements, as the code of laws, and the principles and forms of the constitution, then lately adopted, might require. Mr. Wilson was unanimously appointed for that purpose; and, in a letter to the speaker, dated the twenty-fourth of August, 1791, he submitted to the house of representatives, a long, able, and elaborate plan, formed in consequence of their appointment. In the execution of it, Mr. Wilson made very considerable progress. It had been undertaken, however, under the authority of only one of the houses of the assembly, without the sanction of the other; and in the course of its execution, it was found, that the want of legislative sanction, and of a provision for making pecuniary compensation to persons necessarily employed as assistants in a work of so much labour and importance, joined with the difficulty of obtaining many useful and necessary books connected with the subject, had retarded its progress, and thrown considerable impediments in the way of its completion. An attempt was made to remove these obstacles; and a bill was passed for that purpose by the house of representatives: but it was unfortunately negatived in the senate. The design of framing a digest under the authority of the

legislature, was, of course, relinquished. But Mr. Wilson still contemplated the execution of a similar design, as a private work, and supported only by his own name. This occupied, for a long time, his assiduous attention: he had, in a great degree, prepared the materials; but did not live to arrange them, and to compose the proposed work.

Mr. Wilson was the acknowledged head of the Philadelphia bar, and engaged in almost every important cause; but his ability as a judge is said not to have equalled his eminence as a lawyer. He shone more conspicuously at the bar than on the bench. With sound logic, and mature judgment, he combined a graceful delivery, and ready command of language, which captivated all around him. When he appeared before the assembly, in 1778, on the famous question of the Chester county election; a year or two after, in the great proprietary cause; and subsequently, in that which restored the college to its former trustees; he displayed the most extensive erudition, and the energy of his mind commanded universal admiration. There was something singular in his mode of arriving at his goal. He appeared studiously to avoid the beaten track; but never failed to throw the strongest lights on his subject and theme, rather to flash, than elicit conviction syllogistically. "At any rate," says Graydon, "he produced greater orations than any other man I have heard; and I doubt much whether the ablest of those who sneer at his occasional simplicities, and 'brilliant conceits,' would not have found him a truly formidable antagonist."

Mr. Wilson devoted little of his time to the students in his office, (among whom were judge Washington and Samuel Sitgreaves,) and rarely entered it, except for the purpose of consulting books. Hence his intercourse with them was rare, distant, and reserved. As an instructor, he was almost useless to those who were under his direction. He would never

engage with them in professional discussions; to a direct question, he gave the shortest possible answer; and a general request for information was always evaded. He soon withdrew, almost entirely, from the common law courts, in which he seldom appeared, and not always to advantage. He seemed either to have forgotten, or to have become incapable of descending to the numberless technical and minute details of form, &c. which are indispensable to the practising lawyer in those courts. And he became so frequently entangled in these "*cobwebs*," as he called them, wound around him by men of inferior capacities, that it excited in him an unconquerable disgust, which he could not conceal. His practice was then almost exclusively in the admiralty courts, and particularly, in the court of appeals established by the old congress.

He was, in truth, a learned man, and a profound lawyer; distinguished for his scientific attainments, and conspicuous for his political talents. Possessed of comprehensive means, he had closely devoted himself to the researches which afford materials for the construction of republican institutions; and which, in his hands, would have been absolutely perfect, if political data admitted of mathematical results. He was invested with the diploma of doctor of laws. His various writings indicate a vigorous and comprehensive mind. He wielded his pen, at an early date, in defence of American rights, and in 1774, published a pamphlet entitled "Considerations on the nature and extent of the legislative authority of the British parliament," which was much admired. He rested his arguments on a broader base than any writer had yet done, although it was subsequently adopted; and boldly denied, *in every instance*, the authority of parliament. Before this time, between the years 1767 and 1769, he wrote a number of essays conjointly with bishop White, under the

title of "The Visitant." His "Considerations on the bank of North America," published in 1785, evince an intimate knowledge of banking, and a patriotic desire to support an institution which had rendered such essential services to the country. This publication was occasioned by a bill, introduced into the legislature of Pennsylvania, to repeal an act of assembly passed in the year 1782, by which a charter of incorporation had been granted to the bank of North America: the bill was passed into a law, in September, 1785.

Mr. Wilson was more a man of books, than of the world; and always possessed a simplicity, in this respect, which afforded frequent cause of good-humoured merriment to his friends. In private life, he was friendly, interesting, and hospitable; amiable and benevolent in his deportment; of strict truth and integrity; and affectionate and indulgent as a husband and a father. In a word, his domestic character and conduct were such, as uniformly to secure the reverence and affection of his family and friends.

He was first married, about the year 1771 or 1772, to Miss Rachael Bird, the youngest daughter of William Bird, of Berks county, proprietor of the fine seat and iron-works on the Schuylkill, called Birdsborough. She died in April, 1786. By this marriage, he had six children: Mary, now the wife of Paschal Hollingsworth, of Philadelphia; William, who died at Kaskaskias, seven or eight years since; Bird, now a clergyman in New York, and formerly holding a judicial station in Pennsylvania; James, who was a lieutenant in the army, but resigning that station, became a merchant, and died at St. Domingo, in 1808; Emily, who died at Norristown, 1809; and Charles, first a midshipman in the navy, and afterwards in mercantile business, who died at Havannah, in 1800; the four deceased children died unmarried. Mr. Wilson's second wife was Miss Hannah Gray,

an amiable young lady of Boston, and second daughter of Mr. Ellis Gray, a merchant of that city. By this marriage he had one son, Henry, who died in infancy. This lady survived her husband, and after his death was united in marriage to Dr. Thomas Bartlett, of Boston: she died in London, in 1807, whither she had accompanied her husband.

Mr. Wilson was about six feet in height; very erect. His person was dignified and respectable; and his manner a little constrained, but not ungraceful. His features could not be called handsome, although they were far from disagreeable; and they sometimes bore the appearance of sternness, owing to his extreme nearness of sight. His voice was powerful, but its cadence perfectly modulated.

He died on the twenty-eighth of August, 1798, in the house of his colleague, judge Iredell, at Edenton, North Carolina, in about the fifty-sixth year of his age, while on a circuit in his judicial character, and was interred at that place.

GEORGE ROSS.

George Ross of Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, one of the delegates from that province in the revolutionary congress, was the son of the reverend George Ross, pastor of the episcopal church, at New Castle, in the state of Delaware, and was born in that town in the year 1730. In his early youth he displayed a cheerful and affable disposition, and gave proof of promising talents; these his father attentively cultivated, and made him especially a good scholar in the ancient languages. At the age of eighteen he commenced the study of the law, and prosecuted it under the instructions of his elder brother John, a lawyer of good standing in the city of Philadelphia; when he had finished the regular course of reading, he was called to the bar. Finding the ranks of the profession well filled in the city, he determined to try his fortunes in the interior country, and settled at Lancaster, then near the western limits of civilization, about the year 1751. He had not been long a resident of that place before he married Miss Ann Lawler, a lady of a respectable family; and devoting himself zealously to his profession, obtained a lucrative and increasing practice, with the honourable office of prosecutor for the king.

Actively engaged in his profession, he does not appear to have taken any part in politics for some years, so that the

first public notice we obtain of him, is his election as a representative in the assembly of Pennsylvania, in which he took his seat in the month of October, 1768. He remained a member of the same body until he was called to higher offices at a subsequent period, and during the whole time merited and obtained the utmost confidence, both from his colleagues and his constituents. Whilst in the legislature, he seems to have paid particular attention to the situation of our intercourse with the various Indian tribes settled within the state, or wandering near its borders. This had always been a subject of constant anxiety to the people of the province, and very frequently of difference between the assembly and several of the governors; the latter were indeed too fond of interfering in Indian affairs, and often excited feelings, by so doing, which it was rather their intention to prevent and allay. In one instance Mr. Ross was called on to display his sentiments, by being appointed to draught a reply to a message from the governor, which urged on the assembly an increase of the garrison at Fort Pitt, as a protection against the neighbouring savages. "When we considered your message," says the reply of the assembly to the governor, "recommending the support of a garrison at Fort Pitt, we thought it our duty to inquire into the reason and grounds, if any, for those apprehensions. We were therefore induced to apply to government for information, whether there appeared a disposition in the natives to violate those treaties, and from your last message we cannot find there is the least cause for such a suspicion, otherwise we have no doubt you would, on our request, have communicated it. From whence we are led to conclude, that the uneasiness of the back settlers is without foundation, and by no means a sufficient reason for a measure, which we fear may be productive of the very mischiefs it is intended to avert.

"We well know, that from the first settlement of the province down to the late French and Indian war, the most perfect good understanding and friendship were preserved between this government and those people, by a conduct uniformly just and kind towards them, that since the late Indian war, the like happy effects have been produced by the like policy, and that, on the contrary, the maintaining of garrisons in or near their country, has been frequently an object of their jealousy and complaints. To this we may add, that it appears by intelligence now before us, from the deputy superintendent of Indian affairs in that quarter, that having, in pursuance of his majesty's orders, communicated to the western Indians the evacuation of Fort Pitt, that measure is so entirely agreeable to them, that it is likely to effect a removal of their jealousies, and a conciliation of their affections, to this province.

"We might offer other reasons for not concurring in sentiment with your honour, on the propriety of supporting a garrison at Fort Pitt, but being of opinion that any warlike preparations, even within our own frontiers, at a time of prevailing harmony between us and the natives, may be attended with more ill than good consequences, we shall wave them as unnecessary, and content ourselves with assuring you, that we shall, and we have no doubt but all future assemblies will, be very ready, when there shall be real occasion, to afford every kind of protection to the back inhabitants the circumstances of the province will allow."

But Mr. Ross was soon destined to act as the organ of the assembly, in more important affairs than the quarrels about the maintenance of a petty garrison, or the aggression of a few Indian tribes. He had looked with all the indignation natural to a freeman, on the arbitrary proceedings of the British government, and had been for some time convinced,

that a general co-operation among the several provinces was necessary to secure their liberties. He hailed therefore with delight, the resolutions of Virginia and the other states, proposing the assembly of a general congress. They were not received in the assembly of Pennsylvania until it was on the eve of dissolution, and it was therefore thought more respectful to the people, that whatever measures might be adopted, should proceed from a future assembly, who would meet well aware of the sentiments of their constituents. Mr. Ross was, however, appointed on a committee to draught a reply to the speaker of the house of delegates in Virginia, and in so doing took care to express the cordial feelings he entertained. "The assembly of Pennsylvania," he says, "assure your honourable house, that they esteem it a matter of the greatest importance to co-operate with the representatives of the other colonies, in every wise and prudent measure which may be proposed, for the preservation and security of their general rights and liberties; and that it is highly expedient and necessary, a correspondence should be maintained between the assemblies of the several colonies. But as the present assembly must, in a few days, be dissolved, by virtue of the charter of the province, and any measures they might adopt at this time, rendered by the dissolution ineffectual, they have earnestly recommended the subject matter of the letter and resolves of the house of burgesses of Virginia, to the consideration of the succeeding assembly."

In the month of July following, it was unanimously resolved, to appoint a committee of seven members on the part of the province, to meet the delegates of the other colonies at such time and place as might be generally agreed on; and Mr. Ross was elected one of the members of this committee. He was also by a singular coincidence, at the same time appointed to draw up the instructions under which they, and

himself as one of them, were to act; these however are, very properly, simple and general in their terms; leaving in a great degree the course to be adopted, such as future circumstances might require. "The trust reposed in you," they state, "is of such a nature, and the modes of executing it may be so diversified in the course of your deliberations, that it is scarcely possible to give you particular instructions respecting it. We shall therefore only in general direct, that you are to meet in congress the committees of the several British colonies, at such time and place as shall be generally agreed on, to consult together on the present critical and alarming situation and state of the colonies, and that you, with them, exert your utmost endeavours to form and adopt a plan which shall afford the best prospect of obtaining a redress of American grievances, ascertaining American rights, and establishing that union and harmony which is most essential to the welfare and happiness of both countries. And in doing this, you are strictly charged to avoid every thing indecent or disrespectful to the mother state." Under these instructions Mr. Ross took his seat in congress, on the fifth of September, 1774, and remained a member of that body until January, 1777, when he obtained leave of absence, on account of indisposition, and retired.

His conduct met with the warm thanks and approbation of his constituents; and of this an honourable evidence has been preserved, in a resolution passed by the county of Lancaster, which is as follows; "Resolved that the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds out of the county stock, be forthwith transmitted to George Ross, one of the members of assembly for this county, and one of the delegates for this colony in the continental congress; and that he be requested to accept the same, as a testimony from this county of their sense of his attendance on the public business, to his great private loss, and of their approbation of his conduct. Resolved, that if it

be more agreeable, Mr. Ross purchase with part of the said money a genteel piece of plate, ornamented as he thinks proper, to remain with him as a testimony of the esteem this county has for him, by reason of his patriotic conduct in the great struggle for American liberty." Mr. Ross, however, declined accepting this liberal and honourable present; stating to the committee, in so doing, that his services were overrated by his fellow citizens; that in bestowing them he had been impelled solely by his sense of duty, and that every man should contribute all his energy to promote at such a period the public welfare, without expecting pecuniary rewards.

The occupations of congress did not however prevent Mr. Ross from continuing his duties as a member of the provincial legislature, where we constantly find his name recorded among the zealous political leaders of the time. Early in the year 1775, Mr. Penn, the governor and proprietary of the province, sent a message to the assembly referring to the peculiar situation of the colony; and though couched in mild and conciliatory language, evidently meant to repress if possible the mode of proceeding which had been pursued, by the union and co-operation of all the colonies. "You will agree with me, gentlemen," he says, "that in all cases wisdom dictates the use of such means as are most likely to attain the end proposed. On the present occasion it is conceived, that any grievances which his majesty's subjects in America apprehend they have reason to complain of, should be humbly represented to his majesty by the several assemblies, as the only proper and constitutional mode of obtaining redress; and I have the best reason to believe, that a proper attention will be paid to such representations, and to any propositions that may be made through that channel, on the present state of American affairs. This mode, therefore, I earnestly recommend to you to adopt; and I most ardently wish that the

proceedings of this as well as the other colonies, may be of such a temperate and dutiful nature as to afford a foundation for a re-establishment of that harmony with the mother country, which is so essential to both."

It was the universal custom, at this period, for the assembly to reply at once to the messages of the governor, and on the present occasion, it of course obliged the members of the house to express their opinions, and to decide at once, whether the plan hitherto pursued should be retracted, or whether they should firmly stand by congress and support its measures. The talents of the political leaders of the day were called out, and they exerted themselves, in several long debates, in favour of their several opinions. Mr. Ross was an able speaker, and urged the continuance of decisive measures with all the weight of his talents, character, and influence; and he and his friends so far succeeded, as to obtain the appointment of a committee coinciding in their views, and of which he was a member. This committee presented, as their report, an answer to the governor's address, in the following terms; "We are sincerely obliged to your honour for your attention to the true interests of the people over whom you preside, at a time when the disputes between Great Britain and the American colonies are drawing towards an alarming crisis; and we agree with you, 'that in all cases wisdom dictates the use of such means as are most likely to obtain the end proposed.' We have, with deep concern, beheld a system of colony administration, pursued since the year 1763, destructive to the rights and liberties of his majesty's most faithful subjects in America, and have heretofore adopted such measures, as we thought were most likely to restore that affection and harmony between the parent state and the colonies, which it is the true interest of both countries to cultivate and maintain, and which we most sincerely wish to see restored. We must inform your honour, that a most humble, dutiful and affectionate

petition from the delegates of all the colonies, from Nova Scotia to Georgia, is now at the foot of the throne, and we trust in the paternal affection and justice of our most gracious sovereign, that he will interpose for the relief of his greatly distressed and ever faithful subjects in America. We assure your honour, that this house will always pursue such measures, as shall appear to them necessary, for securing the liberties of America and establishing peace, confidence and harmony between Great Britain and her colonies." On the presentation of the report, another violent debate arose, which lasted for two days, when it was carried by a majority of twenty-two to fifteen voices.

In the summer of 1775, the legislature found that measures more vigorous than resolutions were necessary, and they determined at any rate to make preparation to meet the consequences of their previous measures, whatever they might be. To this end they appointed Mr. Ross, and several of the leading members of assembly, a committee to consider of and report such measures as might be expedient to put the city and province in a state of defence. This committee, after deliberating a few days, brought in a series of resolutions, approving of the association of the people for the defence of their lives, liberty, and property, providing for the pay of such of them as should be engaged in repelling any hostile invasion of the British troops, and recommending the several counties of the province to collect stores of ammunition and arms. To carry their plans better into effect, they appointed a general committee of public safety, for calling forth such of the associators into actual service, when necessity requires, as the said committee should judge proper, for paying and supplying them with necessaries, while in actual service, for providing for the defence of the province against invasion and insurrection, and for encouraging and promoting the manufacture of saltpetre; which said committee were thereby

authorized and empowered to draw orders on the treasurer therein after appointed for the several purposes above mentioned. Of this committee, which became for some time, as it were, the executive organ of the government, Mr. Ross was a leading member, as he was also of another important committee, that of grievances. Besides these duties relative to the war, he was appointed, with two other gentlemen, to prepare rules and regulations for the government of the forces of the province which might be raised.

When the proprietary government was dissolved, and the general convention substituted for the previous legislature, Mr. Ross took his seat in it also, as a representative of Lancaster county. He was, within a few days after its organization, appointed on a committee to prepare a declaration of rights on behalf of the state, and chairman of two others of much importance, that for forming regulations for the government of the convention, and that for preparing an ordinance declaratory of what should be high treason and misprision of treason against the state, and what punishment should be inflicted for those offences.

Indeed, in all legal matters, Mr. Ross at this period stood deservedly high. Before the revolution he was among the first of his profession, and in the change which that event had produced in its component parties, as well as its forensic character, he still maintained the same rank. These changes were indeed very considerable; subjects of higher importance than those which commonly fall to the lot of provincial judicatures were brought forward; motives sufficient to rouse all the latent energies of the mind were constantly presenting themselves. The bar was chiefly composed of gentlemen of aspiring minds and industrious habits; and Mr. Ross found himself engaged among men, with whom it was honourable to contend and pleasant to associate. Mr. Wilson, who had practised with great reputation at Carlisle; Mr. Biddle, from

Reading; Gouverneur Morris occasionally, and occasionally Mr. Reed, till he was chosen a member of the chief executive council; Mr. Sergeant, who, in 1777, was appointed attorney general; and Mr. Lewis, of Philadelphia, in conjunction with Mr. Ross, formed an assemblage of powerful and splendid talents, which might have coped with an equal number of any forum in America. The whole faculties of this bar were soon put in requisition, by the prosecutions which were commenced against some of those accused of being adherents to the British cause. The popular excitement against them was high, and their defence appeared to many a service of danger; but the intrepidity of the bar did not allow them to shrink from the conflict, and Mr. Ross and Mr. Wilson especially embarked all their talents, zeal, and professional reputation in the cause of those who were thus accused.

The last public employment in which Mr. Ross was engaged, was that of a judge of the court of admiralty for the state of Pennsylvania, to which he was appointed on the fourteenth of April, 1779; and while on the bench he was esteemed a learned and impartial judge, displaying sound legal knowledge and abilities, and great promptness in his decisions. He did not, however, long occupy the station he was so well calculated to fill, as he died suddenly in the month of July following, from a violent attack of the gout.

Of his character little remains to be said, beyond that which may be collected from the preceding pages; in his domestic habits he was kind, generous, and much beloved; in his professional career zealous and honourable; as a politician always active and patriotic; and he seems to have well deserved the praise which was bestowed on him by one who knew him, as "an honest man and upright judge."

CÆSAR RODNEY.

The state of Delaware, though one of the smallest in the confederation, has been, for the most part, in the political history of this country, remarkable for the intelligence and ability with which it has been represented in the public councils. This praise was particularly due at the period of the revolution, when her delegates were Cæsar Rodney, George Read, and Thomas M'Kean.

Of these the first is the subject of this notice; and it may be properly remarked that the name of his family is honourably recorded in the history of earlier and of later times. It has been borne by gallant and successful warriors, and by firm and patriotic statesmen; and it is illustrious alike in the annals of the old world and the new. This circumstance, it is true, can add nothing to the dignity of him whose life we are about to record, and from whose acts posterity will perhaps consider that his descendants may claim a truer glory, than any he could derive from his remote progenitors; but the facts preserved among the records of the family, seem properly entitled to insertion, and although it may be absurd to claim any glory to ourselves from the accidental celebrity of our ancestors, that celebrity, when honourably acquired, may be fairly held up as an inducement, to associate the

same name only with honourable and virtuous actions. The earliest authentic memorial introduces to us the name of Rodney at a period when military prowess was the only mark of reputation, and when that prowess was indiscriminately exerted for the promotion of good or bad ends. The spirit of party or the spirit of chivalry, enlisted sir Walter De Rodeney in the cause of an oppressed woman, a queen who was driven by an usurper from her throne. "It hath been a constant tradition," says an old family manuscript, written about two hundred years since, "that we came into England with Maud the empress, from foreign parts; and that for service done by Rodeney, in her wars against king Stephen, the usurper, she gave them land within this kingdom. I confess I have no evidence by me to prove this tradition, besides the pedigree; yet the want thereof will not make it false in itself, though it gain the less credit with others. There was an evidence which would have much strengthened this tradition, but it miscarried at the time of sir George De Rodeney's death; it was a piece of brass of the length and breadth of two feet, or thereabout, whereon was insculpt in ancient characters, the names of those manors and lands given by the empress to sir Henry De Rodeney, the second man in the pedigree, and steward to the young king Henry, who was crowned in his father's life time."

The lands which were thus referred to, were situated in the county of Somerset, on the shores of Bristol channel. The little village of Rodney Stoke still preserves the name which it received at that early period; and probably at this day, certainly not a great many years since, the descendants of the first proprietors were still seated on the domains of their ancestors. The successors of sir Henry De Rodeney seem to have borne their full share in the exploits of those stormy times. Two of them were slain in a battle with Leo-

lin, prince of Wales, at Hereford, in the year 1234; sir Richard De Rodeney accompanying the gallant Richard Cœur de Lion, in his crusade to the Holy Land, fell at the siege of Acre; and his son died at Viterbo, while on his way to Rome, as an ambassador from king John to the Holy See.

In the reign of Edward the second, the wealth and power of the family was much increased by grants made to sir Richard De Rodeney, a gentleman whose knighthood is recorded by the celebrated antiquary Mr. Selden, as one of the most ancient precedents for conferring that rank, he had been able to discover; he was knighted, it seems, in the great hall of the Obie Kainsham in the county of Somerset, by "being girded with a sword by Almarquis earl of Pembrook, and having one spur put on by the lord Maurice of Berkley, and the other by the lord Bartholomew of Badismere." He died in the early part of the reign of Edward the third, leaving a very large estate. "The names of his manors," says the old family chronicle, "were as followeth, viz. Stoke Rodeney, Backwell, Winford, Hallonko, Salford, Tiverton, Lamgate, Lovington, Dinder, Overbagworth, Congressbury Rodeney, and Tithes Court, besides rents of houses in Bristol; which manors continue to this day, at the same rent as they were let in sir Richard De Rodeney's time; but are worth now, upon the improved values, twenty times the rent, which comes to about six thousand pounds per annum; an estate which when my great-grandfather died, (in the 20th of Henry 8,) did equal any gentleman's estate in Somersetshire, being some years before the dissolution of the abbeys, which hoisted up other families into very great fortunes, but not mine."

The next member of the family of whom particular mention has been made, is sir John Rodeney. There was a

painted monument, long existing in the church at Rodeney-Stoke bearing the arms of the family; and "it was a tradition among the old men of the neighbourhood," says the chronicle, "that this monument was erected for good sir John De Rodeney, as they called him; and that the addition of 'good' was given him, because in a jostling match with a German prince upon London bridge, he overthrew him, and thereupon the king, that then was, willed him to ask some reward for his valour, and he asked only an abatement of the king's silver, for his tenants of Stoke, from twenty shillings to six and eight pence, which was granted."

Many anecdotes of this kind might be collected, but it scarcely appears consistent with this brief sketch of the life of one individual, to enter largely into matters which relate to family history. It is certain that there are few names more distinguished for private virtues, or public services during a long course of years, than that of Rodney; and, in a country where noble birth is regarded with a foolish prejudice, a herald would delight in tracing its various ramifications through illustrious families. It was connected by marriage with the well known houses of Burdette, Pawlett, St. John afterwards lord Bolingbroke, Comptons earls of Northampton, and indeed with royalty itself, for sir George Rodney married Jane Seymour, a niece of Edward duke of Somerset, and of queen Jane Seymour, mother of king Edward the sixth.

Long descent and honourable connexions were not able, however, to preserve this family from calamity. By improvidence, by division among various branches, and last of all by the calamities of the civil wars about the time of the commonwealth, its numerous manors had dwindled to two or three, and its members began to seek their fortunes in new occupations and in distant countries. William Rodney had

married Alice Cæsar, the daughter of Sir Thomas Cæsar, a very rich merchant; and his son William might have indulged the expectation of a handsome estate; but to the losses which he experienced from the disturbances of the times, was added the accident of a violent tempest, in which four of his vessels were lost at once, and his grandson was fain to seek his own fortunes in an adventurous life. With this view he made a voyage to Pennsylvania, which had just been settled by William Penn, and after a short residence in Philadelphia, fixed himself in Kent, one of the lower counties upon Delaware, as they were then called. Here he appears to have rendered himself conspicuous at an early period, and to have taken a prominent part in all the leading affairs of the time. He held most of the posts of honour in the territory, and rendered himself highly popular by his exertions to effect a separation between the legislature of the province and that of the counties. In this, aided by the wishes and strong efforts of the inhabitants, he at length succeeded, and as a reward, was elected the first speaker of the new house of assembly. He died in the year 1708, leaving eight children, and a fortune very considerable for those times.

Of the children of William Rodney, nearly all died without issue, in consequence of which the greater portion of his estate descended to his youngest son Cæsar, on whom it had been settled in tail. This gentleman is said to have been a man of a remarkably amiable and benevolent disposition, and so averse to the intrigue and trouble which generally attend public station, that he refused every office which was offered to him, although they included most of the principal ones in the province. He married the daughter of Mr. Thomas Crawford, the first preacher of the gospel in those parts: a man distinguished by his piety, virtue, and successful mission, for whom we are indebted to that institution which has

spread its useful lessons through so many distant regions, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. By this lady he left eight children, the eldest of whom is the subject of this notice.

Cæsar Rodney was born at Dover, about the year 1730. At his father's death he inherited all his lands, which had been entailed upon him as heir male, and succeeded also to that popularity, which his family seem always to have enjoyed. In the year 1758, he was chosen high sheriff of the county of Kent, and on the expiration of his term of service therein, was immediately made a justice of the peace and a judge of all the lower courts. At what period exactly he took his seat in the provincial legislature, we have no means of ascertaining, as the journals of that body, previous to the year 1762, have not been preserved. Of the assembly, however, which met at Newcastle on the twentieth October in that year, he was a member from the county of Kent, and as such took his seat therein.

It is probable, however, Mr. Rodney had been a member of the legislature before this period, for he at once entered with great activity into the prominent measures of the day. He was of a committee with his friend Mr. M'Kean, to draught and present to the governor an answer to his message at the opening of the assembly, and was appointed by the house to transact other business with that officer on their behalf. At the close of the session, he was authorized to have the great seal affixed to the several laws which had been passed, after which the legislature adjourned to the thirtieth of the following September.

In the mean time, however, before the period which was thus fixed for their regular meeting, the members of the assembly met together to consult upon an important subject

which had arisen—the impending misfortunes of their country, occasioned by the stamp act, and other late measures of the British government. The members who were present being the full and only representative body of the freemen of the province, proceeded to appoint a committee to meet the delegates of the other provinces at New York, in a general congress; and they chose on that honourable service, by a unanimous vote, Mr. Rodney, with Mr. M'Kean and the speaker of the assembly, Mr. Kollock. In their instructions, they directed them to join with the committees sent by the other provinces in one united and loyal petition to his majesty, and remonstrance to the honourable house of commons of Great Britain, against the acts of parliament, and therein dutifully, yet most firmly to assert the colonies' rights of exclusion from parliamentary taxation, and pray that they might not, in any instance, be stripped of the ancient and most valuable privilege of a trial by their peers, and most humbly to implore relief.

When the assembly met, pursuant to a subsequent adjournment, on the twenty-sixth of May, 1766, Mr. Rodney and Mr. M'Kean appeared and took their seats, and on the following day reported to the house their proceedings under the instructions they had received. These proceedings, it will be recollected, consisted of memorials, remonstrances and petitions to the British government, relative to their late arbitrary measures. They received the unanimous thanks of the house for their faithful and judicious discharge of the trust reposed in them, and a liberal compensation therefor.

On the repeal of the stamp act, the joy throughout America was, as is well known, universal. Addresses of thanks and congratulation were sent from all parts of the provinces,

and all endeavoured to show the kind feelings with which they were animated, towards the mother country. By the legislature of Delaware, Mr. Rodney was appointed, with his constant friend and colleague Mr. M'Kean, and Mr. Read, to frame an address to the king, expressive of these sentiments; and its tenor is, in some respects, so remarkable, as showing the anxiety, even the tenacity, with which the colonies clung to the British nation, that we shall extract one or two of its clauses. "We cannot help glorying," they say, "in being the subjects of a king, that has made the preservation of the civil and religious rights of his people, and the established constitution, the foundation and constant rule of his government, and the safety, ease and prosperity of his people his chiefest care; of a king, whose mild and equal administration is sensibly felt and enjoyed in the remotest parts of his dominions. The clouds which lately hung over America are dissipated. Our complaints have been heard and our grievances redressed; trade and commerce again flourish. Our hearts are animated with the warmest wishes for the prosperity of the mother country, for which our affection is unbounded, and your faithful subjects here are transported with joy and gratitude. Such are the blessings we may justly expect will ever attend the measures of your majesty, pursuing steadily the united and true interests of all your people throughout your wide extended empire, assisted with the advice and support of a British parliament, and a virtuous and wise ministry. We most humbly beseech your majesty graciously to accept the strongest assurances, that having the justest sense of the many favours we have received from your royal benevolence, during the course of your majesty's reign, and how much our present happiness is owing to your paternal love and care for your people; we will at all times most cheerfully contribute to your majesty's service,

to the utmost of our abilities, when your royal requisitions, as heretofore, shall be made known; that your majesty will always find such returns of duty and gratitude from us, as the best of kings may expect from the most loyal subjects, and that we will demonstrate to all the world, that the support of your majesty's government, and the honour and interests of the British nation, are our chief care and concern, desiring nothing more than the continuance of our wise and excellent constitution in the same happy, firm, and envied situation, in which it was delivered down to us from our ancestors, and your majesty's predecessors." An address of such a nature, it may be supposed, could not but be well received; but of such being the fact we have a singular confirmation, in a letter from Mr. De Berdt, the agent through whom it was transmitted, and who thus writes to the committee in the month of September following. "I put the address into the hands of lord Shelburn, our new secretary of state, who presented it to his majesty, and was very graciously received. I told his lordship, that to me it appeared wrote with the most natural honest simplicity of any I had seen; he said it did, and the king was so well pleased with it, that he read it over twice."

During the years 1766, 1767 and 1768, Mr. Rodney continued a zealous and active member of the legislature, and we find him constantly engaged in various subjects of public interest. Among these we should not omit to mention his efforts, at so early a period, against the increase of slavery. A bill had been brought in by a committee, for the further and better regulation of slaves within the government, and for imposing certain duties on all slaves brought into and sold in the same. When this bill was submitted to the house, an amendment was brought forward and warmly supported by Mr. Rodney, to introduce a new clause totally

prohibiting the importation of slaves into the province; the amendment was indeed lost, but the debate was productive of much benefit, and the majority by which the original bill passed was only two voices.

When the new aggressions of the British ministry overthrew the expectations of future safety, in which the colonies had indulged, Mr. Rodney had again assigned to him, with the same colleagues, the task of presenting the sentiments of the freemen of Delaware to their sovereign. In so doing, the assembly did not fail to renew their protestations of loyalty, but at the same time they freely expressed their regret at the new course of oppression which had been adopted. "The sense," they say, "of our deplorable condition will, we hope, plead with your majesty in our behalf, for the freedom we take, in dutifully remonstrating against the proceedings of a British parliament, confessedly the wisest and greatest assembly upon earth. But if our fellow subjects of Great Britain, who derive no authority from us, who cannot in our humble opinion represent us, and to whom we will not yield in loyalty and affection to your majesty, can, at their will and pleasure, of right give and grant away our property; if they enforce an implicit obedience to every order or act of theirs for that purpose, and deprive all, or any of the assemblies on this continent of the power of legislation, for differing with them in opinion in matters which intimately affect their rights and interests, and every thing that is dear and valuable to Englishmen, we cannot imagine a case more miserable; we cannot think that we shall have even the shadow of liberty left. We conceive it to be an inherent right in your majesty's subjects, derived to them from God and nature, handed down from their ancestors, and confirmed by your royal predecessors and the constitution, in person, or by their representatives, to give and grant to their sovereign,

those things which their own labours and their own cares have acquired and saved, and in such proportions, and at such times, as the national honour and interest may require. Your majesty's faithful subjects of this government have enjoyed this inestimable privilege uninterrupted from its first existence, till of late. They have at all times cheerfully contributed, to the utmost of their abilities, for your majesty's service, as often as your royal requisitions were made known; and they cannot now, but with the greatest uneasiness and distress of mind, part with the power of demonstrating their loyalty and affection to their beloved king."

This address was immediately followed by a correspondence with the governor of Virginia, in which their views were set forth relative to the new aggressions of Great Britain, and a hasty intention declared of co-operating with the other colonies, in such prudent measures as might have a tendency to conciliate the affections of the mother country, and restore their just rights and liberties, and for that end, they earnestly desired to keep up a correspondence with them.

About this period the health of Mr. Rodney was seriously affected, and he was obliged to leave his public duties to repair to Philadelphia for medical aid. He had been for sometime afflicted with a cancer, which forming on his nose, ultimately spread over the whole of one side of his face, and was in the end the cause of his death. The letters of his family are very urgent, that he should cross over to England, for professional advice, if the physicians of Philadelphia proved unable to cure him. He seems indeed to have entertained some serious intentions of passing the Atlantic, but the temporary relief which he obtained, and the increasing interest

of political events, deterred him from ever carrying them into effect.

When the assembly met in October, 1769, Mr. Rodney was chosen speaker, an office which he retained for several years. He was also subsequently elected chairman of the committee of correspondence and communication with the other colonies. In this situation he maintained a constant intercourse with leading men in different parts of the country; and by his influence at home, contributed to, and promoted that union of sentiment, which he perceived was becoming every day more and more necessary.

At length he was called on to make a more direct effort. On the twenty-ninth of June, he received a letter from his friend, George Read of New Castle, mentioning to him that a public meeting had been held there on the subject of British aggressions. This was succeeded, in a few days, by a letter from a committee of the same assembly, in which they requested him, as speaker of the legislature, to call together the representatives of the people, on the first of August following. To this Mr. Rodney immediately replied; and his answer, of which the original now lies before us, is expressive at once of his zeal in the cause, and his anxiety to keep up the strictest mutual good feeling among his fellow citizens. "I shall most cheerfully, I do assure you," he writes, "comply with your request. But I cannot help thinking, it may be done with more propriety, immediately after the intended meeting of the people of this county, which is on Wednesday next; I hope and indeed expect the people here will adopt the same mode that you have. I must, therefore, beg leave to defer writing the circular letters till the day after the meeting of the people here, lest it should give offence to some, who would wish to have a hand in every good work, and thereby injure

the cause. Gentlemen, you may expect to hear from me by express, as soon after our meeting as letters can be written and the express get there, which, I apprehend, will be time enough for the first of August; for I would by no means retard a business of so great importance. I shall send an express to Sussex this day, and endeavour to know by him what they are about to do. In short, you may be assured, I shall do every thing in my power to have a convention of the representatives, on the first day of August next, at New Castle."

Mr. Rodney succeeded in his endeavours, for on the first of August, 1774, a great number of delegates from all the three counties assembled at New Castle, and as soon as they had organized themselves, he was elected their chairman by a unanimous vote. The convention then proceeded to read the letters which had passed between the several committees of correspondence, on the subject of a general congress, and finally adopted a resolution declaring their opinion, that such a measure was in accordance with the desires of their constituents, and serviceable to the general cause of America. They then nominated and appointed Cæsar Rodney, Thomas M'Kean, and George Read, or any two of them, deputies on the part and behalf of this government, at a general continental congress, proposed to be held in the city of Philadelphia, on the first Monday in September next, or at any other time and place that might be generally agreed on; then and there to consult and advise with the deputies from the other colonies, and to determine upon all such prudent and lawful measures, as might be judged most expedient for the colonies immediately and unitedly to adopt, in order to obtain relief for an oppressed people, and the redress of their general grievances.

In pursuance of this appointment, Mr. Rodney took his seat in congress, at Philadelphia, on the fifth of September, 1774, and on the following day was appointed a member of the grand committee who were instructed to state the rights of the colonies in general, the several instances in which those rights were violated or infringed, and the means most proper to be pursued for obtaining a restoration of them. On the meeting of the provincial assembly, in the month of March following, he and his colleagues laid before them a full statement of their appointment and all their proceedings; and the house immediately passed a vote, without a dissenting voice, approving entirely of their conduct. As a further testimony of their approbation, they proceeded on the following day to a choice of representatives for the succeeding congress; and the result was the same as in the preceding year, Mr. Rodney being returned with his former companions. While he was absent at Philadelphia, under this appointment, the office of brigadier general of the province was also conferred upon him.

Shortly after this promotion, he obtained leave of absence and returned to Delaware, in order to attend some private business of importance. Scarcely, however, had he reached home, when he received the following letter from his friend, Mr. Read, who was at New Castle. "I have just received letters requesting your attendance and mine at congress, as there is business of the last importance depending; particularly a motion, the general tenour of which is to declare the principles on which America has hitherto acted, and those which they are disposed still to proceed on; they are extremely pressing, and I, totally unprovided as to my business here, have determined to be at Philadelphia this evening, and should be glad you would follow me. Some extraordinary exertions

are necessary; fail not to come up immediately and bring some gold with you." Such a summons was sufficient to hurry off Mr. Rodney without delay, and he returned there to take an active part in the measures which were agitated during this winter, and which led the way to the declaration of independence, a few months after.

He remained in Philadelphia during the spring, but was obliged to keep up a constant and active intercourse with his own province. In the lower counties there were a great number of persons, disaffected to the congress, and being scattered through the country, it was more difficult to convince them of the impropriety of their acts, or to oppose them by open and decisive, but just measures. His military command, too, required his attention, and, during this period, his letters and messages on that subject are very numerous; he is constantly urging, both on the legislature and on his subordinate officers, the necessity of augmenting their corps, supplying them thoroughly, and collecting them in proper places; it was in no small degree owing to this, that the Delaware line became so distinguished for the discipline, constancy, and good order which it signally displayed during the whole war. On these various subjects his correspondence was very extensive; though but few of his own letters or those he received have been preserved. Among those which do remain, are several from the brave and noble colonel Haslet, an officer who was cut off early in his career; he fell while leading his troops to the charge, with uncommon gallantry, in the battle of Princeton. Being an officer under Mr. or rather general Rodney, as well as a most intimate and attached friend, he reported to him while at Philadelphia, the various matters worthy of notice which occurred in Delaware. In a letter written on the fifth of June, 1776, he thus refers to the situation of affairs there, to which we have al-

luded : "I wrote by express to major M'Donough orders to secure all the ammunition and arms at Lewes, and put himself in the best posture of defence; to call in the guard from False Cape; and if the matter assumes a still more serious appearance, to seize the most suspected of the ringleaders, as hostages for the good behaviour of their dependents. I have recommended to the major, to conduct this whole business in a manner as little offensive to the inhabitants as possible. I cannot help thinking, though very probably mistaken, something of vigorous exertion necessary in both counties; a word, however, to the wise, and your consummate acquaintance in both renders it needless to say more. The source of corruption and direction is at Dover; a hint from thence pervades the lower part of the county in a trice." Mr. Rodney finding, however, that much discontent existed, particularly in the county of Sussex, and anxious at so critical a period that congress should have, as much as possible, the general voice in favour of the decisive measures it was about to pursue, obtained leave of absence for a short time, and returned to Delaware to use his personal influence among the people. He went as far as Lewes, a town at the southern extremity of the state, and succeeded to a very great extent, in preparing and reconciling the people to a change of government, as well as in organizing the troops which had been raised.

During his absence, however, the important question of independence came up; and his colleague, Mr. M'Kean, well acquainted with his views, and anxious that the declaration should be carried by a unanimous vote of the states, looked for his return with great anxiety; as the day appointed, however, approached, Mr. Rodney, who was unacquainted exactly with it, did not make his appearance, and Mr. M'Kean sent a special messenger to convey the intelligence to him. The message no sooner reached him, than, laying aside all

other engagements, he hastened to Philadelphia, where he arrived just in time to give his vote, and secure the unanimity of the daring measure. He transmitted an account of it to Dover on the same day; and his friend, colonel Haslet, in acknowledging his letter on the sixth of July, thus refers to it. "I congratulate you, sir, on the important day which restores to every American his birth-right; a day which every freeman will record with gratitude, and the millions of posterity read with rapture. Ensign Wilson arrived here last night; a fine turtle feast at Dover anticipated and announced the declaration of congress; even the barrister himself laid aside his airs of reserve, mighty happy." At the time Mr. Rodney's letter reached Dover, the election of officers of a new battalion was going on; the committee of safety, however, immediately met, and after receiving the intelligence, proceeded in a body to the court house, where (the election being stopped) the president read the declaration of congress, and the resolution of the house of assembly for the appointment of a convention: each of which received the highest approbation of the people, in three huzzas. The committee then went in a body back to their room, where they sent for a picture of the king of Great Britain, and made the drummer of the infantry bear it before the president; they then marched two and two, followed by the light infantry in slow time, with music, round the square, then forming a circle about a fire prepared in the middle of the square for that purpose, the president, pronouncing the following words, committed it to the flames: "Compelled by strong necessity, thus we destroy even the shadow of that king who refused to reign over a free people." Three loud huzzas were given by the surrounding crowd; and the friends of liberty gained new courage, to support the cause in which they had embarked.

Notwithstanding however Mr. Rodney's services, he was soon destined to experience the mutability of popular feeling. In the autumn of this year, the people of Delaware determined to call a convention, for the purpose of framing a new constitution, and to elect delegates for the succeeding congress. There were, as we have observed, in the lower counties, a great number of persons who were decided friends of the royal government; and even still more who were not disposed, while they adhered to the new order of things, to push the war beyond the bounds of what they considered absolutely necessary and prudent. These persons uniting together, and adding to their ranks many of firmer whig principles, who were induced to join them from personal feeling or motives of ambition, contrived to obtain a majority in the convention; and one of their earliest acts was to remove from congress Mr. Rodney and Mr. M'Kean, two delegates who had, in every instance, shown themselves the uncompromising advocates of liberty. His friend colonel Haslet, who had heard of these events, thus alludes to them in a letter written to him from camp about this time. "I did feel some uneasiness with respect to a change of the delegates at first, but on second thoughts pronounced it groundless; but find it recur on your proposing to retire and quit your station. I acknowledge the justice of your reasoning, and the ingratitude of the people, as well as the malignity of their present leaders; I know you have already sacrificed a large share of private property to the evil and unthankful; in this you resemble the Supreme Manager, who makes his sun to shine on the evil and the good; and bad as times are, you have a few friends still of the latter character. And, my dear sir, who can better afford it; Providence has blessed you with a fortune, to your prudence inexhaustible, by which you are enabled to live where you please, and to keep the first company

where you do live, and all this with few drawbacks upon it. How, then, can you lay out a part of it to more noble purposes than in serving your country, guarding her rights and privileges, and forcing men to be happy even against their will. In this you will act as vicegerent of the Sovereign Goodness, and co-operate with Heaven to save a wretched race; and though you may not affect the righteous purpose, the testimony of an approving conscience, the applause of conscious virtue, and the approbation of all good beings, will more than balance the sacrifice. A thousand things might be urged to the same purpose, but a word to the wise. I am not at all surprised at the tory stratagem to leave you out of the convention ticket; 'tis like the rest of their doings, dark, low, dirty, illiberal. What a wretched struggle must they have had in convention; their consciences drawing one way, and the influence of congress another. I'm told they have done as little as possible, and modelled their new government as like the old as may be." In a letter written about the same time by Mr. Rodney himself, he alludes to the same subject, and thus notices his retirement from public life. "If health and weather permit, I set out this day for Kent, and don't intend to return to congress soon again, at least not in the present reign. My domestic business will employ me all the remaining part of this fall, let matters turn out hereafter as they may."

Mr. Rodney, however, still remained a member of the council of safety, and of the committee of inspection. In these offices he continued diligently to employ himself; collecting from all quarters supplies for the army, and increasing by every means in his power its effective force. By the letters, however, which he received from head quarters, he thought, especially since the death of colonel Haslet at Princeton, that his presence there would give encouragement

to the troops of the state, and induce them to bear more cheerfully the hardships to which they were exposed, by their rapid movements and the inclemency of the season. Among his papers there remains a letter written by him to Mr. Killen, afterwards chancellor of the state, and dated on the twenty-seventh of January, 1777, soon after his arrival at camp. It will throw some light on the events of the period, and indeed seems to have been written with a view to give information to the people of the state relative to them. It is as follows.

"At a time when every sensible mind is filled with the greatest anxiety for the fate of America; when the sons of freedom have drawn their swords, and nobly stepped forth, in this inclement season, to defend their most invaluable rights and privileges; at a time of deep distress and danger, you whose first and greatest temporary wish is for the freedom of the country, are no doubt desirous to know the state of things in this land of trial—this scene of action—this frosty warfare. Be it so—I'll endeavour to amuse, if not inform your eager ear. You have heard—sad intelligence! of your Mercer and Haslet. They fell—but nobly fell, though butchered; and so long as the inhabitants of this American world shall continue to be a free people, so long, at least, will the names of Mercer and Haslet be held in honourable remembrance. Mercer's character is excellent; and in Haslet we know we lost a brave, open, honest, sensible man; one who loved his country's, more than his private interest. But while Washington survives, the great American cause cannot die; his abilities seem to be fully equal to the public spirit that called him forth. History does not furnish you with a greater piece of generalship than he exhibited, on the day poor Haslet fell. He fought—he conquered;—and if we continue to improve the advantages then gained, we shall soon put an

end to the dreadful controversy that agitates and distracts us; and in return have peace, liberty, and safety. Heaven! what a glorious figure in the eyes of men and angels will this vast American world exhibit, in its free, independent state. Nothing will then be wanting but better men, and wiser measures, to make us a happy people.

"There has been no capital stroke since our main army left Princeton, though there seldom a day passes but some advantages are gained, which tend to distress, and in a little time must ruin our enemy. For the particulars of these little engagements I must beg leave to refer you to my brother and others that you will hear from these parts. They are too numerous, and attended with too many circumstances, for my time and power. I have been perfectly well in health ever since I left home, and do assure you that I begin to play the general most surprisingly. I would not have you suppose I mean the fighting general; that is a part of duty I have not yet been called upon to discharge; but when called, I trust I shall not disgrace the American cause; 'tis glorious even to die in a good cause.

"By lord Stirling, whom I found in Philadelphia, I was directed to take the command at this place, to forward the troops to the army as fast as they should arrive, always keeping sufficient for this post. Since my arrival, I have sent forward near two thousand; among others the Delawares, who first went to Princeton, and then were sent by general Putnam to the main army, to convoy forty or fifty wagons. Yesterday, by permission, I set out myself for camp; but on my way received orders to return to my old post, where I now am. General Mifflin is gone to Philadelphia, to forward the troops there. In short, every step is taken, by fixing the most suitable persons in these places, to strengthen our army as soon as possible. It is, I do assure

you, increasing very fast. The cloud is fast gathering all around, and I trust will soon burst on the tyrants' heads. As soon as the chief of the southern troops pass this place, I shall have leave to go and join my brigade."

Mr. Rodney remained with the army for nearly two months, and during a great part of the time entered into the most active and laborious services, which his station as brigadier general required. Even after the period for which the troops under him had enlisted was expired, he offered to remain with the army, and perform the duties of a soldier, wherever the commander in chief might think he could be useful. Sensible of the patriotic spirit by which this offer was dictated, general Washington wrote him the following highly flattering letter, the original of which now lies before us, dated at Morris-Town, on the eighteenth February, 1777.

"Sir—Lord Stirling did me the favour of sending to me your letter of the eighth instant to him, mentioning your cheerfulness to continue in service, (though your brigade had returned home,) and waiting my determination on that head. The readiness with which you took the field at the period most critical to our affairs, the industry you used in bringing out the militia of the Delaware state, and the alertness observed by you in forwarding on the troops from Trenton, reflect the highest honour on your character, and place your attachment to the cause in the most distinguished point of view. They claim my sincerest thanks, and I am happy in this opportunity of giving them to you. Circumstanced as you are, I see no necessity in detaining you longer from your family and affairs, which no doubt demand your presence and attention. You have therefore my leave to return."

"With this honourable testimony of his services, he returned to Delaware, and had scarcely reached home when he was appointed one of the judges of the supreme court, which had

just been organized. The appointment however he declined, preferring, at any rate, for the present, to retain his military situation, in which he thought he could render more service to the general cause. In so doing he met the views of congress, who, through the board of war, expressed the approbation they thought him entitled to receive, for his activity and zeal. In the state, too, those who had lately been, if not his enemies, yet certainly not kindly inclined towards him, felt the necessity of retaining his services, and calling on him, when in situations of embarrassment and difficulty. An insurrection against the government having arisen in Sussex county, they immediately sought his influence to quell it, and issued orders to him to repair thither with a body of men. This duty he cheerfully accepted; and thus alludes to it in a letter to the president of the state. "The field officers will be with me this day, when I shall give orders for the meeting and marching the militia ordered to Sussex county, and hope the tents, &c. will be sent forward as fast as possible. I confess I want the abilities necessary to qualify me for the task assigned, but be assured that every thing in my power, that tends to give peace, safety and good order to the state, shall be done. If I should be able to remove impressions and practices, too predominant in that county and the lower end of this, and introduce good order and a better opinion of the glorious cause for which we are contending, even at the expense of blood and treasure, I shall be happy, not only in having rendered great service to my country, which is and always has been my chief aim, but of meeting your approbation." He succeeded in his object, and restored, at any rate, temporary harmony and good order.

But he was soon called on to exercise his military talents on a larger scale. The British army having landed in the autumn of this year, on the shore of the Chesapeake, were

pursuing their march rapidly to Philadelphia, and general Washington had fixed his head quarters in the northern part of the state of Delaware, for the purpose of opposing them. General Rodney hastened immediately to his aid, with all the troops he could collect in Kent, and endeavoured, though with but partial success, to increase his force by engaging the militia of Newcastle county. By the directions of the commander in chief, he placed himself south of the main army, so as to watch the enemy's movements, and if possible get between them and their shipping. During this period a correspondence was kept up between Mr. Rodney and general Washington, who were interested in each other, not merely from their being thus thrown together in the war, but from a long friendship founded on mutual esteem. Several of their letters have been preserved, but as they relate at this time chiefly to military details, to insert much of them would be out of character with the simple nature of this sketch. Some of them, however, throw a light on the personal difficulties with which the officers of the army had to struggle during the war, and may afford some interest by their insertion. Mr. Rodney thus writes to the general on the ninth of September. "I am here in a disagreeable situation, unable to render you and the states those services I both wished and expected. A few days ago I moved from hence to Middletown, in order to induce the militia in this quarter, who had shown great backwardness, to turn out; especially as by that move most of their farms and property were covered. However, all this has answered no purpose; for though I believe most of their officers have been vigilant, but very few have come in at all, and those few who made their appearance in the morning, took the liberty of returning, contrary to orders, in the evening; thus increasing the duty of, and setting so bad an example to, the troops from Kent, about four hundred in num-

ber, and the only troops I had with me, brought about so general discontent and uneasiness, especially as they were more immediately defending the property of those people, as caused them in great numbers to leave me, though I must say the officers did all they could to prevent it. Two battalions have never even assigned me a reason why they have not joined me. Under these circumstances I removed to Noxontown, where the camp duty on the few I have with me is less severe, until the other troops mentioned shall be ready to move forward, and have written this day to colonel Gist on that head. Yesterday evening I sent a party of my light-horse to take a view of the enemy, and gain intelligence. The officer with his men returned this morning, and reports, that he was in Atkinson's tavern-house, passed some miles through the late encampment of the enemy round about that place, and saw, and was among the fires they had left burning; that the extreme part of their right wing was at Cook's Mill, their left towards Newark. This intelligence makes me the more anxious to collect and move forward such a body, as would be able to render you signal service, by falling upon and harassing their right wing or rear. Be assured all I can do shall be done; but he that can deal with militia, may almost venture to deal with the ——. As soon as I can set forward I shall advise you. God send you a complete victory." In his reply to this letter, general Washington thus remarks: "The conduct of the militia is much to be regretted. In many instances they are not to be roused, and in others they come into the field with all possible indifference, and to all appearance entirely unimpressed with the importance of the cause in which we are engaged. Hence proceeds a total inattention to order and to discipline, and too often a disgraceful departure from the army, at the instant their aid is most wanted. I am inclined to think, the complaints and

objections offered to the militia laws are but too well founded. The interest of the community has not been well consulted in their formation, and generally speaking, those I have seen are unequal.

"I wish I could inform you that our affairs were in a happier train than they now are. After various manœuvres, and extending his army high up the Schuylkill, as if he meant to turn our right flank, general Howe made a sudden countermarch on Monday night, and in the course of it, and yesterday morning, crossed the river, which is fordable in almost every part, several miles below us; he will possess himself of Philadelphia, in all probability, but I trust he will not be able to hold it. No exertions on my part shall be wanting to dispossess him."

On the seventeenth of December, Mr. Rodney was again called on to take his seat in congress, as a delegate from Delaware, but he determined not to repair to Yorktown until the following spring. The state of political affairs had greatly changed in Delaware, but still there were many men of influence who did not unite with as much energy as they should have done, in supporting the plans of the general government; Mr. Rodney therefore determined to remain until the legislature had closed its session, and thus writes to his friend Mr. M'Kean on the subject. "The political changes which had been made will produce, you will be apt to think with me, not only wholesome laws and regulations, but energy in the execution of them, and thereby rouse this little branch of the union from its heretofore torpid state, which God of his infinite mercy grant. I need not tell you how disagreeable is the situation of those in this peninsula, who openly profess friendship to the American cause. A narrow neck of land, liable to the incursions of the enemy by water, in small parties, and therefore their property exposed—the

militia not to be brought forth to the protection of the state, though frequently called upon in the most pressing terms for that purpose. I do not doubt, my dear sir, your desire to see me in congress, or at least that I might be ready to take my seat, when you shall be necessarily called off to the discharge of your duty, in another public department. I wish to be with you, but think it highly necessary I should wait the close of this session of assembly; you know I may be of service."

Mr. Rodney, however, was not destined to appear again in congress, for a few days after the preceding letter was written, he was elected president of the state of Delaware. The office, though honourable, was exceedingly arduous, and during the whole of this year he was constantly harassed with difficulties of various kinds. The legislature of the state, though well disposed, were tardy in their movements where every thing demanded energy and promptness; the disaffected inhabitants of the state were constantly exciting petty insurrections, the British, or loyalists in league with them, made frequent descents all along the extensive shore of the state, and troops could not be collected in time to repel them. These and various other circumstances rendered the situation of Mr. Rodney one of great difficulty and embarrassment; he thus alludes to it, in two letters addressed to Mr. M'Kean, then in congress. The first was written on the eighth of May, 1778. "We are constantly alarmed," he says, "by the enemy and refugees, and seldom a day passes, but some man in this and the neighbouring counties is taken off by these villains; so that many near the bay, whom I know to be hearty in the cause, dare neither act nor speak lest they should be taken away and their houses plundered. These fears will certainly increase till some protection is afforded them; therefore I must again solicit your moving congress in the most earnest manner, for the company I mentioned in

a former letter; if it is obtained our persons and property may be tolerably safe, if not I fear I must decamp. I think congress ought not to hesitate, especially when you consider, that the number of guards heretofore necessary to the defence of a people situate as we are, has exhausted our funds. The practice of landing in small parties, and taking men out of their beds is so villanous, and is so generally adopted by the enemy, as may be sufficient to call the attention of congress to a retaliation; some punishment for this offence might be adopted by this state more properly, were they in proper force for that purpose. The three hundred men ordered for the eastern shore, upon the plan you have mentioned, I have not heard of; however, sure I am, if they are not stationed on the Delaware, they will be of little or no service to us.

"Lord North's speech is certainly the production of a king and ministry hard pushed, and wicked even to the last; for though their salvation depends on their acknowledging the independence of America, and entering into a commercial treaty with us, yet by their plan they are trying to divide us; however, virtue and firmness will, with the blessing of God, as well frustrate them in this, as in all their other damnable projects to cajole and enslave."

The other letter is dated on the eleventh of June, 1778, and in it he thus alludes to his situation. "You and I both have had our disagreeable moments, with respect to the complexion of the Delaware state. However, those who dare persevere in such days of trial cannot now be doubted. He that dare acknowledge himself a whig, near the waters of the Delaware, where not only his property, but his person is every hour in danger of being carried off, is more in my opinion to be depended upon than a dozen whigs in security. You have had your time of trial here, you know how preca-

rious their situation, and you also know their firmness; they did not bear that proportion to the disaffected that I could have wished, yet while they dared contend, I hoped congress would not have supposed the state lost. I thank God! affairs now wear a different complexion, and can I but have the countenance and support of congress, which no doubt I shall, civil government I am convinced will soon be in such force, as to cause those who have offended to tremble."

Mr. Rodney retained his office of president of the state of Delaware for about four years; and during that time his chief attention was called to the affairs of the confederation. As the war increased and the resources of the country diminished, the demands on the separate states became more frequent, and were urged with all the zeal which the dreadful necessities of the time required. At this period we can scarcely believe the state of distress, and almost desperation, to which the continental army was reduced; but as it cannot be uninteresting to their descendants, to know what were the sufferings of their ancestors in the cause of freedom, we shall introduce an extract from two letters of general Washington to Mr. Rodney, in the winter of 1779. "The situation of the army," he says, "with respect to supplies, is beyond description alarming. It has been five or six weeks past on half allowance, and we have not more than three days' bread, at a third allowance, on hand, nor any where within reach. When this is exhausted, we must depend on the precarious gleanings of the neighbouring country. Our magazines are absolutely empty every where, and our commissaries entirely destitute of money or credit to replenish them. We have never experienced a like extremity at any period of the war. We have often felt temporary want from accidental delay in forwarding supplies, but we always had something in our magazines, and the means of procuring more. Neither one

nor the other is at present the case. This representation is the result of a minute examination of our resources. Unless some extraordinary and immediate exertions be made, by the states from which we draw our supplies, there is every appearance that the army will infallibly disband in a fortnight. I think it my duty to lay this candid view of our situation before your excellency, and to entreat the vigorous interposition of the state to rescue us from the danger of an event, which if it did not prove the total ruin of our affairs, would at least give them a shock they would not easily recover, and plunge us into a train of new and still more perplexing embarrassments, than any we have hitherto felt."

In the following spring general Washington wrote another letter to Mr. Rodney, of a tenor equally painful. "I am under the disagreeable necessity of informing you," he says, "that the army is again reduced to an extremity of distress, for want of provision. The greater part of it has been without meat from the twenty-first to the twenty-sixth. To endeavour to obtain some relief, I moved down to this place with a view of stripping the lower part of the country of the remainder of its cattle, which after a most rigorous exaction, is found to afford between two and three days' supply only, and those consisting of milch cows, and calves of one or two years old. When this scanty pittance is consumed, I know not what will be our next resource, as the commissary can give me no certain information of more than one hundred and twenty head of cattle expected from Pennsylvania, and about one hundred and fifty from Massachusetts. I mean in time to supply our immediate wants. Military coercion is no longer of any avail, as nothing further can possibly be collected from the country in which we are obliged to take a position, without depriving the inhabitants of the last morsel. This mode of subsisting, supposing the desired end could be

answered by it, besides being in the highest degree distressing to individuals, is attended with ruin to the morals and discipline of the army. During the few days which we have been obliged to send out small parties to procure provision for themselves, the most enormous excesses have been committed.

"It has been no inconsiderable support of our cause, to have had it in our power to contrast the conduct of our army with that of the enemy, and to convince the inhabitants that while their rights were wantonly violated by the British troops, by ours they were respected. This distinction must unhappily now cease, and we must assume the odious character of the plunderers, instead of the protectors of the people; the direct consequence of which must be, to alienate their minds from the army, and insensibly from the cause. We have not, indeed, yet been absolutely without flour, but we have *this* day but *one* day's supply in camp, and I am not certain that there is a single barrel between this place and Trenton. I shall be obliged, therefore, to draw down one or two hundred barrels from a small magazine which I had endeavoured to establish at West Point, for the security of the garrison in case of a sudden investiture.

"From the above state of facts it may be foreseen, that this army cannot possibly remain much longer together, unless very vigorous and immediate measures are taken by the states to comply with the requisitions made upon them. The commissary general has neither the means nor the power of procuring supplies; he is only to receive them from the several agents. Without a speedy change of circumstances, this dilemma will be involved: either the army must disband, or what is, if possible, worse, subsist upon the plunder of the people. I would fain flatter myself that a knowledge of our situation will produce the desired relief; not a relief of a

few days, as has generally heretofore been the case, but a supply equal to the establishment of magazines for the winter. If these are not formed before the roads are broken up by the weather, we shall certainly experience the same difficulties and distresses the ensuing winter, which we did the last. Although the troops have, upon every occasion hitherto, borne their wants with unparalleled patience, it will be dangerous to trust too often to a repetition of the causes of discontent."

It may well be supposed that Mr. Rodney did not receive these letters without feelings of the deepest distress. Having for years taken so active a part in all the struggles for independence, whatever various forms they had assumed, how could he look calmly on, and see that independence endangered, at the very moment when it seemed secure? Having served as a soldier himself in the armies of the revolution, how could he bear that those who had been the partners of his toils, should now be sinking, neglected and forsaken, without a friendly hand being extended to relieve them?

He therefore adopted every expedient he could devise, to increase and assist the army. He brought the subject repeatedly before the legislature; urged the persons entrusted with the levying and transmission of supplies; kept up a constant correspondence; and succeeded in affording immense benefit. "You may assure the committee appointed to procure flour," he says in a letter to Mr. Dickinson, "that I shall do every thing in my power to forward the business, but expect the flour will come high; as those termed speculators are as thick and as industrious as bees, and as active and wicked as the devil himself. I doubt much whether any of the taxes mentioned by the committee, are as yet paid into the treasury; however, I have written to the

treasurer, expect to hear from him in a few days, and will immediately let them know." And in a letter addressed to the persons appointed to receive the supplies, he uses this strong language; "being convinced of the necessity, I do most earnestly require an immediate discharge of the duty enjoined you by the act of the general assembly of this state, for procuring an immediate supply of provisions for the army &c., especially as to the article of beef-cattle. You will see by the letters enclosed, the pressing necessity, and the bad consequence, if we fail to comply with the requisition. I therefore expect you will immediately use your utmost exertion to comply with the requisition of congress, as far as the act of assembly above mentioned, has enabled the gentlemen in your department to do it, and I do require, as absolutely necessary, that you inform the commissary general from time to time of your success in this business, so that he may have proper persons at Wilmington to take them off your hands, as he has engaged."

Such was the zealous and honourable course pursued by Mr. Rodney, as long as he held the office of president of the state of Delaware. By his firm and liberal conduct he secured the universal esteem of every portion of the people; and by the decided tone of his measures he increased the strength and augmented the resources of the general government. At length, however, fatigued with the arduousness of his duties, he determined to retire from office, and in the year 1782, declined a re-election. His constituents, however, would not permit him to retire from public life, for he was immediately chosen a delegate to congress, as he also was in the succeeding year.

It does not appear that Mr. Rodney ever took his seat by virtue of these elections. Though not very far advanced in years, his health had become exceedingly infirm. He had

been afflicted from his youth with a cancer, which, as we have mentioned, gradually spread over one side of his face, until it was so disfigured as to oblige him to wear a green silk screen over it; and he did so for many years before his death. The exact period of that melancholy event, we have no means of accurately ascertaining; it would appear, however, to have been in the early part of the year 1783, and was certainly occasioned by the complaint of which we have spoken.

Of the personal character of Mr. Rodney, we have few opportunities of obtaining information, beyond the materials which have formed the subject of this notice. As a politician, he displayed at all times great integrity and high mindedness, never yielding his deliberate opinions to the prevailing sentiments of the day, and sacrificing his present interest to his sense of honour and justice. This course, in a few instances, was for a time injurious to his political aims, but it eventually gained for him, what an honourable course always gains for a statesman in the end, the unbounded confidence and esteem of his countrymen. Though he was, as the tenor of his life has shown, a firm whig in all his principles and conduct, warmly devoted to the liberties of the states, and opposing alike the open warfare and secret attacks of their enemies, he blended with all his actions the feelings of an amiable man. The number of loyalists or refugees was, as we have observed, very numerous in that part of the state where he resided, and the friends of freedom were kept constantly on the alert, to oppose and overthrow secret insurrections which were springing up, every day and in every direction. As is always the case in this species of unnatural warfare, the feelings of the contending parties assumed a personal ferociousness of character, which is not often seen in the conflicts of general enemies. The ties of vicinage, often of consanguinity, increased rather than allayed the hit-

terness of their hatred; and the successful party triumphed over the conquered foe, with more than the satisfaction of ordinary war.

To appease these feelings, and to obviate their consequences, was the continued and often the successful effort of Mr. Rodney. The advantages of his popularity, his well known patriotism and his public station, gave him an influence which he never failed to exert in so generous a cause. Many anecdotes of this kind are remembered, and yet related among those who lived where he lived; and they might be preserved as honourable instances of the union of firm patriotism, with kindly feeling. While he was governor of the state, a gentleman of Dover, of high personal character, and before the revolution of considerable popularity, had by several acts so strongly displayed his partiality to the royal cause, that the citizens, exasperated and indignant, determined to arrest him for high treason; the issue of such a proceeding at such a time, was scarcely doubtful, and the rash gentleman would probably have forfeited his life, for the useless display of his equally useless predilections. The evening before the arrest was to be made, and when an attempt to escape was too late, Mr. Rodney was informed of it; he sent immediately to the gentleman, and had him brought to his own residence. In the morning the mob, disappointed of their prey, and informed of the place of his concealment, rushed tumultuously to the governor's house and demanded their victim, as one notoriously guilty of crimes which merited at least the decision of the law. Mr. Rodney stepped out calmly before them, acknowledged that his guest had been indeed extremely imprudent, but that as he had surrendered himself to him, the chief magistrate of the state, he had become answerable for his appearance, and would see that justice was done to all. The knowledge of the governor's character and views was a suf-

ficient guaranty to the crowd, and in a short time they dispersed. The imprudent loyalist remained until the political heat of the times had in some degree subsided, and pursuing for the future a wiser course, escaped the dangerous rock on which he had been so nearly destroyed.

The private character of Mr. Rodney is chiefly remarkable for its good humour and vivacity. He was fond of society, and not averse to the pleasures of the table, never exceeding, however, the boundaries of propriety and good manners. He was particularly fond of associating with persons younger than himself, to whom his easy manners, long knowledge of the world, and fund of wit and anecdote, afforded a never failing pleasure. From constitutional feelings, he always avoided scenes of sorrow; and never approached the death-bed, even of his most intimate friends. The vivacity of his domestic manners was carried into his public life, and those whose memory is stored with reminiscences of the old congress and the revolutionary war, have many a tale, to illustrate the gaiety and humour of Cæsar Rodney. Among others the following one may be recorded, from an authentic source. The delegates from the southern states, but especially from Virginia, were remarkable, during the early periods of the revolution, for indulging a sectional prepossession, not indeed maliciously, but often sarcastically. When it broke out in high wrought eulogies and preferences to Virginia, over all the other members of the confederacy, it was termed *dominionism*. Among the representatives of that ancient and really noble state, there was no one who more delighted or oftener indulged in this complacent but somewhat mortifying species of gratulation, than Mr. Harrison; he was however, completely cured of it by an incident which occurred, when his state was threatened with an invasion by the enemy. He had frequently displayed the "abundant and powerful re-

sources of that meritorious member of our Union;" and although he had painted them in colours brighter than was correct, he no doubt believed them to be just. When, however, the danger was approaching, the picture was found too glaring. He introduced a demand for supplies of arms, munitions of war of every species, troops, and assistance of every kind; and declared the state destitute in every point and circumstance. When he sat down there was a momentary silence, all being surprised that such a development should come from him. Mr. Rodney rose from his seat, in a style peculiar to him. He was, at that time, an animated skeleton; decorated with a bandage, from which was suspended the green silk covering over one eye, to hide the ravages of his cancer—he was indeed all spirit, without corporeal tegument. He was thin, emaciated, and every way the antithesis of his friend Harrison; who was portly, inclining to corpulency, and of a mien commanding, though without fierté. Both of the members were really representatives of their respective states. Rodney, who was endowed, as we have mentioned, with a natural and highly amusing vein of humour, began, with a crocodile sympathy, to deplore the melancholy and prostrate condition of his neighbouring, extensive, and heretofore "powerful" state of Virginia! But, said he, in a voice elevated an octave higher than concert pitch; "let her be of good cheer; she has a friend in need; DELAWARE will take her under its protection, and insure her safety." Harrison was astounded; but joined (for he relished a good hit, for or against him) in the laugh; and the subject lay over to another day.

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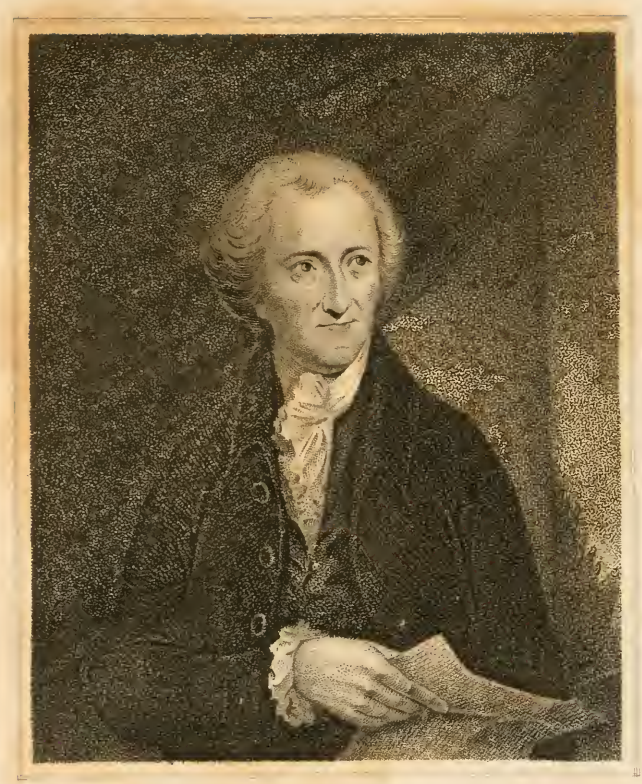

GEORGE READ

GEORGE READ.

George Read was born in Cecil county, in the province of Maryland, in the year 1734, and was the eldest of six brothers. His father, John Read, was the son of a wealthy citizen of Dublin, and having emigrated to America, settled in Cecil county, where he became a respectable planter. Soon after the birth of his eldest son, he removed to Newcastle county, in the province of Delaware, and established himself on the head-waters of the Christiana river.

The parents of Mr. Read determined, at an early period, to confer such an education upon their son, as would enable him to pursue one of the learned professions. The small number of schools was, at that period, a serious obstacle to the dissemination of knowledge. The nearest reputable seminary to the residence of Mr. Read's parents was at Chester, in the province of Pennsylvania, where he was taught the rudiments of the learned languages. From this school he was removed to New London, in the same province, and placed under the care of the Reverend Dr. Allison, a man eminently qualified for the arduous task of imparting instruction to youth. Deeply versed in the learned languages, his mind was free from the alloy too often mingled with the pure gold of classic lore; he explored the mazes of science in solitary study, without being ignorant of the

world; without despising the beauties of elegant literature, and without neglecting the decencies of society. His knowledge of human nature enabled him quickly to discern the bent of a pupil's genius, his master vice, and dominant foible.

Among the fellow-pupils of Mr. Read, were Charles Thompson, secretary of congress, Hugh Williamson, a member of that body from North Carolina, and Dr. Ewing, Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, eminent as a mathematician and astronomer. The meeting of the first three of these distinguished men must, under any circumstances, have been pleasing; but to meet, as it occurred in the present instance, in the first congress of America, a body endued with Roman spirit, and Roman virtue, in that illustrious assembly, surrounded by the guardians of the rights of three millions of their fellow men, must have been to them a source of deep-felt gratification.

Mr. Read diligently pursued his studies under the care of Dr. Allison, until his seventeenth year, at which early age he was removed from school, and commenced the study of the law with John Moland Esq. an eminent lawyer in the city of Philadelphia. An education terminated at so early a period of life must necessarily have been incomplete; but the disadvantage of being forced into the world with a scanty stock of knowledge, was common to his contemporaries. Mr. Read actively applied himself to the study of his profession. It required more intense application at that period than at present, to qualify a young man for admission at the bar. The student was not then assisted by digests, abridgments, and excellent elementary treatises on every ramification of the law. The excessive toil which, at that day, was requisite for the attainment of legal knowledge, was best calculated to form habits on which were founded the most cer-

tain presages of eminence at the bar, and erudition on the bench. Hence Mr. Read was conspicuous in after-life for research and accuracy, and the margins of almost every book in the extensive law library which he possessed, whilst living, are covered with his notes; so true is it, that the foundation of industrious habits is always laid in early life. The confidence reposed by Mr. Moland in the abilities of his young student was so great, that long before the term of his studies had expired, he entrusted him with his docket, and confided to him all his attorney's business. Indeed, the talents, industry, and zeal, of Mr. Read, while in the office of Mr. Moland, generated an attachment towards his pupil, stronger and more permanent than the relation of lawyer and student usually produces.

In the year 1753, Mr. Read was admitted to the bar, at the early age of nineteen years. By the then existing laws of Maryland, and the three lower counties on Delaware, he was, as eldest son, entitled to two shares of his father's property. His first act, after his admission to the bar, was to relinquish by deed all claim upon his father's estate, generously assigning as the reason for this relinquishment, that he had received his full portion in the expenses incurred by his education, and that it would be a fraud upon his brothers not to renounce his legal right.

In the year 1754, he settled in Newcastle, and commenced the practice of the law, in the then three lower counties on Delaware, and the adjacent ones of Maryland. He found himself in the midst of powerful competitors,—men of great talents, and consummate lawyers; among whom were John Ross, then attorney general, Benjamin Chew, George Ross, John Dickinson, and Thomas M'Kean. To have rapidly obtained full practice among such competitors, is, of itself, sufficient praise. On the thirtieth of April, 1763, he succeeded

John Ross as attorney general for the three lower counties on Delaware. He was the first attorney general expressly appointed for these counties; as, before this period, the attorney general of Pennsylvania was the prosecuting officer in Delaware. Mr. Read held this office until he was elected a delegate to the congress of 1775; he then resigned it, declaring that he would not enter upon the arduous duties of a representative in that august body, trammelled with an office held from his Britannic majesty.

Mr. Read was particularly eminent as a deep read lawyer; and he was powerfully versed in special pleading,—the logic of the law. His elocution was neither flowery nor rapid; on the contrary, he was somewhat slow in his speech, and negligent in his manner; but his profound legal knowledge, his solidity of judgment, and his habits of close and clear reasoning, gave him an influence with juries and judges, which the graces of the most finished oratory would have failed to impart. His conclusions were always founded on calm and cautious deliberation, which seldom led him into error. His legal knowledge and judgment were so conspicuous, that his opinions were held in high and general estimation.

In the year 1763, Mr. Read married a daughter of the Reverend George Ross, who had been, during fifty years, pastor of Immanuel Church, in the town of Newcastle. It was one of his favourite maxims, that men ambitious of arriving at the acme of their professions, should never marry; but his good sense taught him that the sacrifice of domestic enjoyment would be inadequately compensated by the highest honours. The understanding of Mrs. Read, naturally strong, was carefully cultivated by her father, who bestowed more attention upon her instruction than it was the common lot of females, at that period, to receive. Her person was beautiful, her manners elegant, and her piety exemplary.

During the revolutionary struggle, her trials were many and severe. The enemy, constantly on the maritime border of Delaware, kept the state in perpetual alarm by predatory incursions: the British army, at different periods, occupied parts of her territory, or marched through it. Frequent change of habitation was not one of the least evils which accompanied the war of the revolution. Mrs. Read was almost always separated from her husband, who was unremittingly engaged in the public service. She was often compelled to fly from her abode, at a moment's warning, with a large and infant family. But she never was dejected; instead of increasing the heavy burden of a statesman's care by her complaints, she animated his fortitude by her firmness.

The domestic enjoyments of Mr. Read were soon interrupted by the contest which, in 1765, commenced between Great Britain and the colonies. As Mr. Read held an office under the British government, and possessed great and acknowledged influence, his adherence to the English ministers would no doubt have ensured him a share in the preferments and pecuniary rewards, lavishly bestowed upon those who supported the schemes of oppression which they had planned: but his patriotism and integrity induced him to take a decided part with those who opposed the aggressions of parliament, as soon as the disputes between the colonies and the mother country commenced. It was not vanity, but a proper estimate of his own abilities, and the knowledge that they were duly appreciated by his fellow citizens, which assured him that he would be called upon to act an important part in the momentous drama, as soon as his sentiments became known. He well knew that the post of leader, whether civil or military, was at once the post of danger and the place of honour. Success was problematical, and he could not

doubt that the British ministers, imbittered by opposition, and flushed by victory, would single out as victims, those who had been most active and influential in opposing their designs. Clemency was little to be expected where vengeance could be exercised under the guise of policy. But neither interest, nor fear, could divert him from taking the course which he believed to be right, and, once taken, "inflexible in faith," he never swerved from it.

In October, 1765, he took his seat in the general assembly of Delaware, as one of the representatives from Newcastle county, which station he continued to occupy during the twelve ensuing years. Mr. Read was one of the committees which reported the numerous addresses made to George the third by the Delaware legislature, on behalf of their constituents, and which merit the encomiums so deservedly bestowed upon our revolutionary state papers.

The following is an extract from a circular letter, addressed by Mr. Read to his fellow citizens in the lower part of Newcastle county: it explains the reasons which caused the inhabitants of Delaware to enter into a non-importation agreement at a later period than their brother colonists:

"In the present struggle made for liberty by the colonies around us, I hope this government will not be pointed at as unconcerned in the common cause. Hitherto, the representatives of the people in assembly, have contributed their mite with other bodies of the like kind, through the continent; it is now become more particularly the business of the people in general to consider their present situation, and what may be further done in support of measures apparently necessary; I mean the non-importation agreements entered into, from time to time, since the late act of parliament imposing duties on tea, paper, glass, and painter's colours. From our local circumstances, it seemed unnecessary for the people

of this government to enter into resolutions of non-importation from the mother country, as we had no traders among us who imported goods from Great Britain, except in very small quantities, and in vessels belonging to Philadelphia, which was sufficiently guarded by the agreement of her own citizens. Lately it has been discovered that a few of the traders of that city have become tired of what they call virtuous attempts to restore freedom to America, and endeavoured to dissolve the Philadelphia non-importation agreement. One of the principal arguments made use of, is the probability of losing the trade of this government. They say that the Maryland non-importation agreement, having excepted many more articles of merchandise than that of Philadelphia, the people here will form a connexion with the Marylanders in the way of trade, introduced by going there to purchase such excepted articles, which trade may continue after all contests with the mother country are over. This is a plausible and forcible argument, and to remove all the weight it may have, the inhabitants of the upper parts of this county, particularly in and about the towns of Newcastle, Wilmington, Christiana, Newark, Newport, and Hamburg Landing, have resolved to support the Philadelphia agreement. It is now in the power of the people of this government to lend a helping hand, and be of real use to the general cause. Some of the people of New York have deserted it, but, it is thought, will be brought back to their duty. To prevent the like accident taking place at Philadelphia, we ought to destroy the argument alleged before. Let us be content to confine our trade to its former channels; there is our natural connexion; let us forego some trifling conveniences in hopes of greater advantage; resolve not to purchase any goods out of the government but such as are

excepted in the Philadelphia agreement, and fall upon some effectual measures to support this conduct."

The agreement recommended by Mr. Read was soon very generally adopted. It was dated the seventeenth of August, 1769, and framed with much vigour and ability. After stating, in energetic language, the grievances which compelled them to co-operate with their fellow colonists in the measures best calculated to invite or enforce redress, they "mutually promise, declare, and agree, upon our word of honour, and the faith of Christians,"

"*First*, That from and after this date we will not import into any part of America any goods, wares, or merchandise, whatsoever, from any part of Great Britain, contrary to the spirit and intention of the agreement of the merchants of the city of Philadelphia.

"*Second*, That we never will have any dealing, commerce, or intercourse whatever, with any man residing in any part of the British dominions, who shall, for lucre or any other purpose, import into any part of America any article contrary to the said agreement.

"*Thirdly*, That any one of us who shall wilfully break this agreement, shall have his name published in the public newspapers, as a betrayer of the civil rights of Americans, and be for ever after deemed infamous, and a betrayer of his country."

It is a curious fact, that no measure was devised for detecting violaters of this agreement until a year after it had been formed: such was the confidence in the virtue of the community, that an infraction of the compact was little apprehended. But when the enthusiasm which gave animation and efficacy to this patriotic act had in some measure subsided, owing to the privations to which it subjected those who had signed it, some individuals basely forfeited their

word, their honour, and their christian faith, by violating the solemn pledge. Those who led the van of the covenant breakers, were shop-keepers; they had not, perhaps, less patriotism than other classes of their fellow-citizens, but their virtue was assailed by stronger temptations. Nor were they the only apostates; for if there were sellers of interdicted merchandise, there must also have been purchasers. To arrest this evil, which threatened the virtual dissolution of the compact, a system was devised as simple as it proved efficacious. On the fourth of June, 1770, Mr. Read expressed himself upon the subject in the following manner, in a letter addressed to one of his friends: "Several towns in this county have chosen two committee-men each, to adopt such resolutions respecting trade as the present exigency seems to require. They met lately at Christiana, and were unanimously of opinion that the Philadelphia agreement should be supported; and for this purpose, two persons were appointed, in each town, a committee of inspection to *watch the trade*. The duty of these persons is to examine what goods are brought into this government, and in case they discover any sales by shop-keepers of articles not excepted, to report the same to the general committee, who shall determine what shall be done thereupon."

Mr. Read was elected chairman of this general committee. The subordinate committees performed their duty with so much diligence and activity, that they equalled the agents of the best organized police in the discovery of delinquents. Every section of the county was subjected to a system of espionage, so inconsistent with American notions of liberty, that nothing but the urgency of the case, and the benefits which it produced, could have induced the citizens to tolerate it. The adherents of Great Britain were too small in number to shield the violaters of the compact from its penalties.

When information was given against them, they generally appeared before the general committee, who inflicted no other punishment than requiring from the offender a public declaration of sorrow for the offence, a promise not to repeat it, and payment to the committee of the proceeds of sales of non-excepted articles, for the use of the poor of the county. The delinquents, however, were few in number.

At a meeting of the inhabitants of Newcastle county, on the twenty-ninth of June, 1774, Mr. Read was appointed, with twelve other persons, to conduct a subscription for the relief of the poor inhabitants of Boston, who were deprived of the usual means of subsistence by the act of parliament commonly called the Boston port bill. The people eagerly adopted this mode of manifesting their abhorrence of a cruel and ineffectual act of despotism, and their sympathy with those whom it reduced to want. By pecuniary sacrifices for their relief, they, in some measure, made themselves partakers of their sufferings, and their patriotism. In February, 1775, Mr. Read, who had been appointed, in conjunction with Nicholas Van Dyke, Esq., to receive the donations, remitted nine hundred dollars to the Boston committee, being the amount of subscriptions in Newcastle county. The notification to the committee at Boston occasioned the following letter from Samuel Adams to Mr. Read, dated on the twenty-fourth of February 1775.

"Sir—By your letter of the sixth instant, directed to Mr. David Jeffries, the committee of this town, appointed to receive and distribute the donations made for the relief and employment of the sufferers under the Boston port bill, are informed that a very generous collection has been made by the inhabitants of the county of Newcastle, on Delaware, and that there is in your hands upwards of nine hundred dollars for that charitable purpose. The care you have taken, with

our worthy friend Nicholas Van Dyke, Esq., in receiving these contributions, and your joint endeavours to have them remitted in the safest and most easy manner, are gratefully acknowledged by our committee; and they have directed me to request that you would return their sincere thanks to the people of Newcastle, for their great liberality towards their fellow-subjects in this place, who are still suffering under the hand of oppression and tyranny.

"It will, I dare say, afford you abundant satisfaction to be informed that the inhabitants of this place, with the exception of a contemptible few, appear to be animated with *an inextinguishable love of liberty*. Having the approbation of all the sister colonies, and being thus supported by their generous benefactions, they endure the most severe trials with a manly fortitude, which disappoints and perplexes our common enemies. While a great continent is thus anxious for them, and administering to their relief, they can smile with contempt at the feeble efforts of the British administration to force them to submit to tyranny, by depriving them of the usual means of subsistence. The people of this province behold with indignation a lawless army posted in their capital, with the professed design to overturn their free constitution. They restrain their just resentment, in hopes that the most happy effects will result from the united applications of the colonies for their relief.

"May heaven grant that the counsels of our sovereign may be guided by wisdom, that the liberties of America may be established, and harmony be restored between the subjects in Britain and her colonies."

On the first of August, 1774, Mr. Read was elected by the general assembly of Delaware, together with Cæsar Rodney, and Thomas M'Kean, to represent that state in the American congress, which met in the month of September in Philadel-

phia. Mr. Read represented the state of Delaware in congress during the whole revolutionary war, excepting a short interval, when by virtue of his office of vice-president, he acted as her chief magistrate, in consequence of the capture of president M'Kinley immediately after the battle of Brandywine.

In the year 1775, the decisive appeal to arms was made. While Mr. Read, in conjunction with the sages of congress, was giving tone and direction to the ardour of our armies, two of his family were asserting the liberty of their country in the field; colonel Read, who was lately gathered to his fathers in a venerable old age, and colonel, afterwards general, Thomson, who had married the sister of Mrs. Read. The following letter from general Thomson, who, at the head of the first rifle regiment raised in Pennsylvania, joined the American army besieging Boston, indicates the sprightly courage of the Irishman, while it exhibits, in pleasing characters, the naiveté of the soldier; it was written from the camp on Prospect Hill, on the tenth of September 1775:

"Dear Brother—I would have written to you before this time, but was prevented by being very much hurried when I first came here, and I knew you had accounts at large every day from people here, who had much more time to write.

"I am fixed at present on the most beautiful spot of ground in the world, as I can see from the door of my tent, all our well regulated army, from Roxbury to Winter Hill, and at the same time look down on the enemies of our country, confined within the narrow bounds of Boston and Bunker Hill; and further you may depend they shall not pass, had they lord North and all the troops in the pay of Great Britain to assist them.

"Our troops are well supplied, and in high spirits, and long much to come to action, but I am doubtful we shall have but little to do in the fighting way in this quarter, this campaign.

"I am very happy in all my commanding officers. I always had a high esteem for the commander in chief, and higher now than ever. I am every day more pleased with general Lee; our country owes much to him, and happy we are that a man of his great knowledge assists in the command of our army.

"They have appointed me the second colonel in the continental army; and colonel Fry, who is the first, does the duty of brigadier general, so that if my friends take care for me, I may soon be promoted in the continental or provincial congress. There are a great many colonels in the family;—do make me a general.

"All the news is cannonading and a few bombs,—the most harmless sport in life: indeed, I have seen more mischief done by throwing the same number of snow-balls; but, don't tell cousin Gurney so, for if you do he will bring over the poor devils he killed in Germany last war, to show that people have been put to death by cannons in other parts of the world, though the Americans are proof against them.

"Let me hear from you: my best compliments wait on Mrs. Read, your dear little ones, and all friends."

The momentous subject of independence, which occupied the attention of congress early in 1776, did not prevent Mr. Read from taking an active part in the affairs of his state. Whenever it was practicable to leave, with propriety, his post in congress, he repaired to Delaware, not to enjoy in the bosom of his family the repose he so much needed, and a respite from his patriotic toils, but to employ his talents and his

influence wherever they could prove most serviceable to the state. The American senator did not disdain the duties of a member of the committee of safety, and, in the year 1775, he shouldered his musket in the ranks of the militia, refusing the highest commission, which he was urged to accept.

In the month of May, 1776, Mr. Read was one among the multitude of his fellow citizens who witnessed the attack made by the row-galleys upon the Roebuck and Liverpool frigates, off the mouth of Christiana creek: the following letter written to Mr. M'Kean and Mr. Rodney on the tenth of that month contains some particulars of that affair:

"Gentlemen—The enclosed letter came to hand this evening, by the person employed to take the two hundred pounds of lead to Lewistown, sent by brigadier M'Kinley, upon the requisition of colonel Moore, which you have seen.

"The committee of safety have thought it highly necessary that you should be acquainted with the situation of the magazine at Lewistown, to exert your influence for an immediate supply of powder and lead, which, I suppose, must be by land, as the Roebuck and Liverpool will probably continue as high up the river as Reedy Island; this morning they are in the bite below Newcastle, and though the row-galleys have proceeded down from Christiana creek's mouth, about two hours ago, I am apprehensive the high wind now blowing, will not permit their acting to advantage in that cove.

"We have had warm cannonading between the ships and galleys these two days past, all within our view. Great intrepidity was shown on the part of our people, who compelled the two ships to retire, not much to their credit; but it appeared to me the ships were afraid the galleys would get below them. Young captain Houston led the van. As to other particulars, I must refer you to some of the very many

spectators from your city, who will have returned before this time.

"I suppose it will be thought that too much powder and shot have been expended by the galleys in these attacks, but I am well satisfied they have produced a very happy effect upon the multitudes of spectators on each side of the river; and in that part of the colonies where the relation shall be known, British ships of war will not be thought so formidable. A few long boats drove, and apparently injured, those sized ships that seemed best calculated to distress us.

"The committee of safety are going this morning to Newcastle, and downwards, to see what may be necessary to advise for the protection of the shore below. Truly the people at large have shown great alacrity and willingness on this occasion. I know not when I shall be with you, as I may be of some little use here. I shall stay till there is some alteration in the appearance of things. Excuse this scroll. My compliments to all friends."

Young Houston, who so gallantly led the van in the battle of the row-galleys, was a native of Philadelphia: he was a handsome man, of polished and agreeable manners, and much admired in female society.

We are informed by a venerable revolutionary naval officer, that he was captured, three days after the battle, by the Liverpool, captain Boileau, who was a native of Scotland. This officer related to our informant, that, in the hottest of the fight, a row-boat came from the shore, manned with four boys, who placed themselves directly under the stern of his ship, and fired incessantly into her. His officer of marines, calling his attention to these juvenile assailants, exclaimed, "captain, do you see those d——d young rebels? shall we fire upon them?" "No, no," cried the brave old Boileau, "don't hurt the boys; *let them break the cabin windows.*"

In the heat of the engagement, the attention of many among the innumerable spectators who lined the shores of the Delaware, was diverted from the novel spectacle of a naval combat, by a militia major, who rode at full speed among them, threw himself from his horse, which he let loose among the crowd, and entreated to be put on board of one of the galleys. With much difficulty, he persuaded two men to put off in a boat with him. He steered directly for the galley nearest the enemy, and, as soon as he reached her deck, stationed himself at a gun. The cartridges failed: cartridge paper was called for to make a supply, but it was all expended: the gallant major instantly pulled off his boots, cut off their feet, filled them with powder, and rammed them into his gun. When he returned home, he boasted that he had not only been in the engagement, but had *fired his boots at the enemy*.

In the month of July, the question of independence arose; and though it may be perceived from what has been mentioned in a previous part of this volume, that at the time, Mr. Read was opposed to the passage of the declaration, this opposition arose from no indisposition to the measure itself, when he deemed it necessary, but from his belief that it was at that moment inexpedient, and that the instructions he had received from his constituents, as they then stood, were insufficient to authorize his vote in favour of the proceeding. When however it did receive the sanction of congress, he firmly and zealously supported it, and affixed his name, with the other delegates, to the declaration itself. Indeed whatever diversity of opinion may have existed in relation to the time of adopting this measure, the strictest union was preserved when its immediate necessity was impressed upon the minds of the minority. The glory of the enterprise in which they had embarked, appeared the same to all, and all regarded independence as the only security of peace and liberty. With

them, peace and liberty were indissolubly connected; "et nomen pacis dulce est, et ipsa res salutaris: sed inter pacem et servitutem plurimum interest: pax est tranquilla libertas, servitus malorum omnium postremum; non modo bello, sed morte etiam repellendum." Such were the sentiments of our forefathers, and, in the fruits of their wisdom, we enjoy the repose of liberty, and they have merited and obtained a high and noble station among the heroes and patriots of the world.

Soon after the Declaration of Independence, Joseph Galloway observed to Mr. Read that he had signed it with a halter about his neck; Mr. Read replied that it was a measure demanded by the crisis, and he was prepared to meet any consequences that might ensue.

In September, 1776, he was president of the convention which formed the first constitution of Delaware. In the autumn of 1777, he was compelled to assume the arduous and responsible duties of chief magistrate of the state, in consequence of the capture of president M'Kinley by a detachment of British troops, immediately after the battle of Brandywine. The first presidency of the state had been offered for his acceptance, but he declined the honour.

At the time of Mr. M'Kinley's capture, Mr. Read was at Philadelphia, assisting in the deliberations of congress. He left that city as the British army entered it, and while returning to Delaware for the purpose of assuming the presidency, thus forced upon him, he narrowly escaped the misfortune which had befallen president M'Kinley. It was impracticable to pass from Philadelphia to Delaware on the western side of the river, as the British occupied the whole pass into the peninsula. Necessity, therefore, compelled him to proceed along the Jersey shore of the river, and brave the risk of crossing it, although almost covered with the ships of the enemy. On the thirteenth of October, 1777, Mr. Read

arrived at Salem, in New Jersey, and procured a boat to convey himself and family across the Delaware, there about five miles wide. At this time, there were several British men of war lying at anchor off Newcastle. When the boat had almost attained the Delaware shore, she was descried by the enemy, who immediately despatched an armed barge in pursuit of her. The tide being, unfortunately, low, the boat grounded so far from the beach that it was impossible for Mr. Read to land with his family before their pursuers arrived. There was only time to efface every mark on the baggage which could excite any suspicion that Mr. Read was not, as he represented himself, a country gentleman, returning to his home. The officer who commanded the boat was of no higher rank than that of boatswain; and the presence of Mr. Read's mother, wife, and infant children, gave sufficient probability to his story to deceive sailors, who like all thoughtless persons, are little prone to suspect deception. The honest hearted fellows assisted with great good humour in landing the baggage, and carrying the ladies and children on shore.

The nice balance of political power which our constitution has so admirably adjusted between the general and state governments, was not, in the day of revolution, regarded: hence Mr. Read was, at that time, a delegate in congress, as well as vice-president of the state of Delaware.

The duty which the subject of our memoir was now called upon to perform, was most arduous. The situation of affairs, in general, was gloomy. These were, indeed, in the classic language of the revolution, the times that tried men's souls: the battle of Brandywine had been lost; the British had entered Philadelphia; the battle of Germantown followed; the fathers of our country were at York; and our brave countrymen in arms, naked and houseless, were exposed to the storms of winter at the Valley Forge. No consolation could

be derived by Mr. Read, from a view of the state of things in his more peculiar department: Sussex county was but slowly recovering from the intestine war which foreign emissaries had kindled among her deluded inhabitants, and obstinate men of opposite opinions as to the expediency of laws, chose to obey such only as they thought proper. Yet, under these discouraging circumstances, the firmness of Mr. Read remained unshaken, and he employed every means which his abilities and influence afforded, to conciliate or destroy the discordant opinions that threatened to become so inimical to the welfare of the state.

Mr. Read evinced great solicitude in relation to president M'Kinley, then in the hands of the enemy, and made every exertion to ascertain his situation, provide for his wants, and procure his exchange. He solicited the interference of the commander in chief, and at length addressed a communication to commodore Griffith of the Solebay, in which vessel Mr. M'Kinley was confined, for the purpose of ascertaining his wants, and requesting such indulgences and kind treatment as his high character demanded.

On the fifteenth of November, 1777, Mr Read received the following letter from general Washington:

"Sir—Your favour of the fifth instant, enclosing a copy of a letter from you to general Smallwood, dated the twenty-sixth ulto., and the substance of his answer, did not reach me till the day before yesterday. It gives me great concern to find that the legislature of your state has not taken timely and effectual means for completing the battalion belonging to it. However desirable the mode of voluntary enlistments might be, if it offered any adequate prospect of success, our circumstances evidently demand measures of more prompt and certain execution: it is incumbent, therefore, upon your legislative body, as a duty which they owe both to their own state

and the continent at large, to pursue with energy the method of draughting which has been successfully practised in other states; indeed, I expect that you will shortly be called upon by congress for this purpose.

"The property of the clothing taken in the prize sloop will, I presume, be determined by certain resolutions of congress, copies of which were sent to general Smallwood, in order to settle a dispute of a similar nature; but, however this matter be decided, you ought undoubtedly to secure a sufficient quantity of this necessary article, to supply the wants of the Delaware battalion.

"I am totally ignorant of any interruption having been given by the military to the election of representatives in your stats: it is much to be lamented that, at a season when our affairs demand the most perfect harmony and greatest vigour in all public proceedings, there should be any languor occasioned by divisions. Your efforts cannot be better employed than in conciliating the discordant parties, and restoring union.

"The complaints against the commissaries of purchases, I fear are too well founded: such orders shall be given to the principal of the department for this district, as will, I hope, in some degree, remedy the evils complained of."

To this communication, Mr. Read, now president, pro tempore, of the state, returned the following answer:

"Sir—I was honoured by yours of the eighth instant, delivered to me on the fifteenth, by colonel Pope, by whom I immediately wrote to persons in authority in the counties of Kent and Sussex, to give him every assistance in procuring clothing and blankets for the use of our battalion with you. I know not what may be the success, but have hopes that sufficient for their immediate use will be obtained. The state

had made some provision in this way, at the time of raising the battalion in the beginning of the year, a part of which was then only expended, but upon the march of general Howe's army through this country, the greater part of what remained was sent by a person in whose custody it was, with his own effects, in a vessel, into Manto creek, in the Jerseys, near to Red Bank fort, where it is at present safe. I know it consisted of three hundred and fifty yards of cloth, of different kinds, the gleanings of very many stores. I luckily laid my hands upon one hundred and fifty yards of linen of the public stores; saved from the enemy's searches in Wilmington, which is made into shirts, ready for colonel Pope on his return.

"The county of Newcastle has heretofore been so stript of clothing, that we have not a sufficiency for the few militia we have now in service, guarding the shores of the Delaware. The manufacture of this state ever was inconsiderable in proportion to the number of its inhabitants, they depending, principally, on foreign goods purchased at Philadelphia. That part of the state which contributed most in this way, was severely pillaged by general Howe's army, both of clothing and sheep, so that their distress is great at this season.

"To give you some idea of the amazing price necessaries have risen to, a man next door to me has just purchased a little American made linen for family use, at fifty-eight shillings per yard, such as but three years since, sold for four shillings. I have a tanner's bill for leather now before me, in which sole-leather is charged at ten shillings per pound, two calf's skins at seventy shillings each, and a third at ninety; the three not weighing six pounds. Shoes are selling from six to eight dollars per pair. How to remedy these things, I know not; they make unfavourable impressions.

"I have the satisfaction to inform you that we have put an almost entire stop to the intercourse which was had with the enemy's ships, since they came into our river. This requires all the militia that we can procure, as we have a water communication of more than one hundred and twenty miles in our front, and too many of our people disposed to supply themselves with salt, sugar, and coffee, at lower rates than those at which they can be had in the state.

"We have been peculiarly unlucky in the capture of our president, our public papers, money, and records. This disaster damped the spirits of our people; they have not got over the effects of it. While on this subject, I must entreat your excellency's attention to procuring our president's release, by exchange, as soon as it may be in your power. His usefulness was such that his loss is severely felt through the state, and particularly by myself, upon whom the office of president devolves, as speaker of the legislative council. I am truly inadequate to either station, but especially to that of vice-president. Be assured that in procuring his speedy return here, you will do a signal service to the state, as well as to your excellency's, &c."

In the commencement of the year 1778, a correspondence took place between Thomas M'Kean and Mr. Read, which is highly valuable: it introduces us, as it were, into the more private scenes of the olden time; it exhibits to us two men of strong and original minds, the one characterized by excessive ardour, and the other by cool and dignified circumspection, whose united object was the liberty and prosperity of their country. On the tenth of February 1778, Mr. M'Kean writes from York, as follows:

"Sir—Your favour of the twenty-ninth of December did not reach me until the twenty-fourth of January, when duly

reflecting upon every circumstance, I thought it my duty to come here, though, I confess, I am almost tired of serving my country so much at my own expense. I left home the twenty-ninth of last month, and went into congress next morning, where I found only nine states represented, and, including myself, but eighteen members, though five, now at the camp, and some others, are expected in a few days: I hope general Rodney and major Van Dyke will come as soon as possible, but don't tell them that I lived at a little Dutch tavern, at an enormous expense, before I could get lodgings, and that I still am on sufferance.

"The situation of Delaware gives me constant anxiety. The choice of representatives in October 76, and *their* choice of officers have occasioned all its misfortunes. Nothing but effectual laws, vigorously executed, can save it; and there seems to me not the least prospect of the former; and when I learn that not a single step has been taken towards collecting the fines under the present inadequate militia law, or to punish the most impudent traitors, or even the harbourers of deserters, I despair of any law, tending to support the freedom, independence and sovereignty of the state, being executed, especially in Kent and Sussex. The conduct of the general assembly, in having neither imposed a tax for reducing the paper bills of credit, nor passed laws necessary even in times of profound peace, much less for completing their quota of troops, putting their militia on a respectable footing, &c. &c. is too conspicuous not to cause the disagreeable animadversions I am obliged continually to hear. However, I must drop the subject.

"I shall endeavour to procure the account against the state from the auditor general, as soon as possible. The votes of congress since first January, 1776, printed by Aitkin, are not yet come to hand, though they have been sent out of Phil-

adelphia. I shall send you all that can be got, not knowing to what time they have been printed up.

"Who can I propose in exchange for the president? Do inform me, if you can think of any one. None occurs to me but governor Franklin, and hearing a gentleman say *that he could do more mischief than the president could do good*, I have little hopes of success from that proposition. I was told the other day, that he lodged at the widow Jenkins, along with his old friends ——— and ——— and seemed very happy. These observations, and others from different gentlemen, whenever I name him in private to any member, almost discourage me; however, after I hear from you, I shall attempt to have him released, lest it should be thought I was indifferent about the event, though I could wish my colleagues to be present and assisting.

"Notwithstanding all the diffidence you so modestly express of yourself, the state of Delaware thinks herself in happier, and I am sure she is in wiser, hands than those of your predecessor.

"In answer to your favour by your brother you will receive ten thousand dollars, to be expended in recruiting only, as congress have lately purchased clothing to a great amount at Boston, and the battalion will be furnished by the clothier general. If more should be wanted you will be pleased to write to me again, but I would advise that the recruiting officers should first render you an account of this sum. No letter from general Smallwood has yet appeared in congress; when there does, I will attend to it.

"The whole affair respecting the schooner, in my opinion, rests with the judge of the admiralty in the first place, and must be decided upon by the resolves of congress, (there being none but what you have upon the subject,) and the laws of England. An appeal lies in congress. The case is, un-

doubtedly, in favour of the state, and not the first possessor, whether wreck or derelict.

"I have no news but what major Read can tell you, and shall therefore conclude with my best compliments to Mrs. Read."

On the fourth of March 1778, Mr. Read writes:

"Sir—Your favour of the twelfth ultimo was delivered to me by major Read, with ten thousand dollars for the recruiting service, which I immediately put into the hands of general Rodney to distribute among the officers now out on that business, who have orders to state their expenditures, and report them upon their next application for monies. You have enclosed a copy of some resolutions of the general assembly for the more speedy filling up of our battalion, by an addition of bounty, and a premium to the officers, in which I am authorized to apply to congress for a loan of forty thousand dollars. Such is the state of our funds, (which you well know), that this must be the mode of supply; therefore I request you to obtain that sum, and deliver it to the bearer, lieutenant William Frazier, whom I send for the purpose: a less sum will not do, as much will be expended in the subsistence, and the expense of these special expresses is great. By report, some of the officers have had considerable success already, in recruiting in the whole about fifty men. Yet I cannot believe the number wanted will be made up in this way; the general assembly have thought otherwise, and would not consent to the mode of draughting, though warmly recommended by general Washington as the only probable and effectual way; and on this occasion, I am told members were very unanimous. A bill for holding an election in Sussex on the second instant, being passed, the assembly adjourned over to this day. The situation of this state is much to be lamented, though I think you have heightened it in your

colouring. I doubt all your intelligence respecting it is not well founded: bad we are, and too many affect to screen themselves by railing at what is, and what is not done, without contributing to a remedy; for instance, as to the militia law. Not the warmest whig, or the most violent complainer of the times, (being an officer of the militia), has taken one step to carry any part thereof into execution, which will have this bad consequence, that much greater difficulties must attend the carrying any future law of the sort into execution, as well as the total loss of the fines under the present law, however inadequate, which by this time would have made a useful fund. A great mistake among many of us, has been to set at nought such acts of legislation as do not exactly tally with our sentiments: this has a fatal tendency at all times, but particularly at the present, making each individual a judge of what he ought, and what he ought not, to submit to. Not a single resolution of congress was transmitted to me since I came into the presidency, till the tenth ultimo, but the two you sent relating to the trade carried on by the disaffected, a want of representation in congress, and the appointment of a day of thanksgiving, though I wrote to the president of congress on the twenty-fifth of November, for copies of such as this state ought, or were expected, to act upon; every public paper transmitted to president M'Kinley being lost to us. Mr. President Laurens (to whom I beg you to present my compliments and thanks) did at last obtain some copies from the secretary's office, which he enclosed with a line of the thirtieth January, by parson Montgomery, delivered to me on the tenth ultimo, as mentioned before; but he omitted a very essential one, the plan of confederacy, though he sent a copy of the recommendatory resolve to invest the delegates with power to assent thereto: for my own part, I had not seen it till I accidentlly laid my hands on a printed copy be-

longing to Cecil county, where my family are. Mentioning this, leads me to ask you what you think of some particular expressions therein; to wit: "provided also that no state shall be deprived of territory, for the benefit of the United States," in the last of the second section, article ninth; and in the same article, section fourth, "regulating the trade, and managing all affairs with the Indians, not *members* of any of the states, provided that the legislative right of any state within its own limits be not infringed or violated." In the eighth article, providing for a common treasury, in proportion to the value of all "land within each state, granted or surveyed for any person:" Quere: what ought to be the extent or limits of the territory of Virginia and Massachusetts, if not the absurd claim to the south sea, is it not necessary to be settled now? Quere: is it a practicable scheme to value the lands of the continent for taxation? if so, Quere: if the states, who have known and very small limits, ought to have every foot of their land rated, for the protection of the ungranted lands in these boundless empires? Quere: if such a fund may not be formed in the boundless states, from the grants of lands, as will tend to diminish the present inhabitants of the other states by migrations there, and discourage European settlers from fixing in the bounded states? Quere: if they may not prove dangerous to the liberties of America, from their extent and internal strength? I will not add to this list; these are terrifying to me, and sufficiently account for the speedy approbation, as published, from those two states; and besides, I, with a multitude of others, have been taught to expect that all lands not purchased from, or ceded by, the Indians to the king of Great Britain, as the proprietor of the colonies, were to be considered as belonging to the United States generally, and might procure for them a fund to pay our great debt with. I have my

doubts as to the whole of the third sect. art. ninth: will it not have a bad effect on our state? But to return to the subject of the resolves of congress, and particularly those relating to our quota of troops, and their clothing, they could not be acted upon till made known, and the same may be said as to laying a tax for sinking our proportion of five millions of dollars in the present year; with this, that the military in Sussex, established by congress, independent of any authority in the state, prevented a representation from a third of the taxables thereof for the time past, and, according to the American creed, representation is necessary for taxation. Much more might be added to lessen the charges made against us. Yet I am satisfied much must be done to wipe off such as are justly founded. I own the prospect is rather gloomy, but we are not to despair. No man is in a more difficult and unlucky situation than myself. Without any fixed habitation in the state, with little assistance, or prospect of assistance, in want of health and ability of body, I will not add mind, though also true, least I be suspected of seeking a compliment.

"I showed general Rodney and Patterson that part of your letter which relates to president M'Kinley; neither of them, or myself, had heard of his lodging with ——; and general Rodney thinks it cannot be, for he has been told by those who knew, and might be relied on, that ——— was at ———, and ——— at one ———'s, a shoemaker, and had lodged there from the time of their going into Philadelphia. General Rodney says the president lodges now at one ——'s, opposite Christ church. I cannot pretend to point out a person to exchange for the president, but submit it to you on a review of the list of prisoners in the civil line, under the immediate direction of congress, which general Washington seems to refer to, in a paragraph of his letter to me on that

subject, an extract of which I think you have in mine of the twenty-ninth of December last; as to the presence of your colleagues on this occasion, or any other, shortly, you are not to expect it; Mr. Rodney is very necessary here, and as to Mr. Van Dyke, the situation of his family will keep him for a while; for my own part, I think it a piece of justice due to every captive, to procure his release as soon as practicable, upon honourable terms; and as to the president, and his unlucky captivity, I am convinced he meant to support the cause of America to the utmost of his power; and I therefore wish you success in the application.

"The bad weather we have had, has delayed the express to this day, the ninth of March, which enables me to enclose you a list of the members for Sussex; the most of them came to town last evening, and only three members from Newcastle county; so that we have not had a house since the twenty-fifth ultimo. Mr. Rodney says that he has nearly paid away the ten thousand dollars to the recruiting officers, one of whom, lieutenant Brown, came in yesterday from Marshy Hope bridge, where he had enlisted fourteen men on the Friday preceding—all volunteers, who came in for the purpose; so that our prospect is very flattering in this way at present: fail not to obtain the loan, and give despatch to the messenger, a lieutenant in the troop of horse of this county, and you will oblige him, as well as your most obedient, &c."

On the third of April, 1778, Mr. M'Kean writes from Yorktown:

"Sir—When I attended the general assembly of this state in December last, they obtained a promise that I would give a little assistance in draughting some bills at their adjournment in March, at which time I, accordingly, in pursuance of a letter from the speaker, went to Lancaster, and, having

stayed there ten days, returned to York on the nineteenth. During this interval, your favour of the fourth of March, by lieutenant Frazier, arrived at York, and by the advice of the express, was opened by the president and read in congress. It was well there was nothing private in it, and I must confess, you gave me more agreeable prospects of our little state, and more sincere pleasure, than any thing relating to it had done for three years past. I congratulate you on the whig election in Sussex. With such a general assembly as the present, what could I have done, or rather could I not have done? Sure I am, you will make a proper use of this most fortunate occurrence, in which there appears visibly the hand of Providence, which can alone save this deluded state. Though the resolve for completing the quota of troops, by draughting in the several states, passed against my consent, yet as Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, the four New England governments, &c. have agreed to it, I should have been glad if the general assembly had even proceeded no further in that business; this would have showed a respect for the recommendation of congress, encouraged the recruiting service by making it the interest of every individual in the state, and prevented an opinion that I had wrote to the general assembly against the measure, which I never did; nor, indeed, did I ever hint the matter to any person whatever. As to the proviso in the second section of article ninth of the confederation, quoted by you, to wit; "provided also that no state shall be deprived of *territory* for the benefit of the United States," my opinion is, that it must be referred to the subject-matter of the preceding paragraph, and may, by a fair construction, mean that in a contest between two states respecting boundaries, the territory taken from the one shall be added to the other, and not adjudged for the benefit of the United States; and yet I confess I have apprehensions, that it may, hereafter, be in-

sisted to mean what you seem to fear. Some gentlemen with whom I have conversed on this affair say, if the intention of congress was, that Virginia, &c. should be deemed at present to extend to the south sea, yet no injury could arise from thence to any of the United States; for that Delaware, for instance, has a right to apply for one or more townships for their troops, to be laid out equally with Virginia in that state, without paying any purchase money, or any other expense, more than that of surveying, &c. which Virginians themselves must pay; and that, if that state increases in inhabitants, it will have to pay more towards the support of the government of the United States, and in the same proportion lessen the burden of the other states; but if Virginia, &c. grow too large, the people themselves will insist upon a new state or states to be erected, even if the congress should be passive; and no good reason can be assigned for refusing such a requisition, whenever it may be proper to grant it. The Stockbridge Indians in New Hampshire and Connecticut, the Oneidas in New York, &c. were I suppose the objects of the fourth section of the same article. The third section of article ninth, seems to have been calculated for the disputed lands between purchasers under Maryland and Delaware, and Maryland and Pennsylvania; but upon the whole, it may not be an improper method of adjusting such controversies. If Delaware had been represented in congress, at the time the finishing was given to the confederation, it would, I am persuaded, have been a public benefit, as well as a particular one to that state; but matters are too far gone I fear, to procure any alterations, so many states have already empowered their delegates to ratify it; however, I will exert every nerve to accomplish any measure which shall be recommended by my constituents, who may think it advisable to direct their deputies to endeavour to procure any explana-

tion of certain doubtful expressions in different articles, if they should not think it proper to do more.

"Nothing has been effected with regard to president M'Kinley; but as the cartel for a general exchange is now debating, and settling between three commissioners on the part of general Washington, and the like number on the part of general Howe, in Germantown, where they met on the last day of March, I hope in a few weeks, something favourable for him may be done.

"If you can procure any clothing for the Delaware battalion, it may be useful; but I am confident there is sufficient for the whole army, already purchased by congress, for above a year; and yet I am told the most of the troops are naked. Peculation, neglect of duty, avarice and insolence, in most departments abound; but, with the favour of God, I shall contribute my part to drag forth and punish the culprits, though some of them are high in rank, and characters I did not suspect.

"You will also receive a little pamphlet of the earl of Abington's, which is worth your perusal. General Rodney is not yet arrived, nor could I procure a lodging for him in town when he comes; indeed, when I return, I shall be at an equal loss for myself; this is discouraging, but we must not expect much comfort during this great and glorious struggle. It is reported Howe is recalled, and is to be succeeded by lord Townshend; this will be an active, and I fear a bloody, campaign.

"I find you give up the command in chief to general Rodney, so that perhaps it may suit you to come to congress."

On the third of February, 1779, Mr. M'Kean laid before congress sundry resolutions adopted by the council of Delaware in the preceding month of January, relative to the ar-

ticles of confederation and perpetual union, and concurred in by the house of assembly, previously to the passage of a law empowering their delegates to sign and ratify them. Mr. Read, one of the committee appointed to take these articles into consideration, prepared the resolutions: their insertion, therefore, will not only afford an example of the political style of Mr. Read, but the able opinion of a sound lawyer upon a matter of deep interest.

"The committee, to whom were referred the articles of confederation proposed by congress for a union of the states of America, do report thereon as follows:

'That having duly considered the said articles, they *generally* approve of the same, but that there are particular parts of the eighth and ninth articles liable to just and strong objections, and, should they continue unaltered, will, in the opinion of your committee, prove prejudicial in their effects not only to this state, but to the general confederacy.

'That part of the eighth article objected to, and disapproved of, by your committee, is the manner prescribed for the supply of a common treasury by the several states;—to wit: "in proportion to the value of land within each state GRANTED TO OR SURVEYED for any person, as such land, and the buildings and improvements thereon, shall be estimated, according to such mode as the United States, in congress assembled, shall from time to time direct and appoint." Such valuation, in any mode that we can suppose to produce equality, appears to your committee an impracticable thing; but if not, it will be attended with so great expense of money and time, and that to be frequently repeated from the sudden alterations in the value of such property, that your committee think the establishing the proportion of each state by the number of its inhabitants, of every age, sex, and quality,

would prove a more equal and less expensive mode of ascertaining such proportion.

'Your committee also consider the confining such valuation to the *granted* or *surveyed* lands as inequitable, as they conceive the lands not yet granted have a value, and, if so, they ought to contribute *pro rata* towards the discharge of the great debt created by the states, under their past united efforts in the protection of that species of property in common with others: unless all the ungranted lands shall be considered as jointly to belong to the United States, as conquered at the common expense of blood and treasure, and which your committee consider they ought to be, on every principle of justice and sound policy, and that joint right expressed in the articles in as clear and precise terms, as that the "bills of credit emitted, money borrowed, and debts contracted, by or under the authority of congress, shall be deemed and considered as a charge against the United States." But this joint right, your committee apprehend, may hereafter be said to be resigned to each state wherein such lands lie, by certain parts of, and expressions in, the ninth article disapproved of by your committee; to wit: by the words "*provided also* that no state shall be deprived of territory for the benefit of the United States," at the latter end of the second section; and those words in the fourth section, which prescribes the powers of congress; viz. "regulating the trade, and managing all affairs with the Indians, not members of any of the states, provided that the legislative right of any state within its *own limits* be not infringed or violated."

'From the vague and extravagant descriptions of some of the states, in the first grants or charters for government, their claims for western limits have been to the southern ocean, including countries partially possessed by the kings of France and Spain. The provisional expressions in the article above

mentioned, your committee apprehend, may and will be insisted to mean an admission of the extent of their respective limits, westward to the said sea, and all the ungranted lands within those limits, *state territory*, and solely in the disposition of the states claiming those limits, though, heretofore, considered as belonging to the crown of Great Britain, and occasionally granted under that authority, with reservation of rents to a great amount. Such admission, your committee apprehend ought not to be; for that it will appropriate that to individual states, which hath been, or may be, acquired by the arms of the states general, and will furnish such individual state with a fund of wealth and strength, which may prompt them to subdue their weaker neighbours, and eventually destroy the fabric we are now raising. To prevent which consequences, your committee are of opinion that not only the joint right in the ungranted land should be expressed as before mentioned, but that a moderate extent of limits beyond the present settlements in each of those states, should be provided for in the said articles.

'Your committee also object to, and disapprove of, the whole of the second section of the ninth article aforesaid, as destroying and taking away that legal jurisdiction of the courts of law established within this state for determining controversies concerning private rights in lands within the same without fixing with precision another jurisdiction for the purpose.'"

Mr. Read also prepared the act of assembly which empowered the delegates of Delaware to ratify the articles of confederation.

On the eighteenth of August, 1779, he was compelled, from ill-health, to resign his seat in the legislature: in his address to the freeholders of Newcastle county, he observes that "he had served them in their general assembly for the twelve per-

ceding years, without any solicitation on his part ;" that "he was in earnest in declining, and did not wish to be courted to continue in their service, having no sinister ends or views to answer by this step, which had been suspected to have been the case of some who had given notices of the like kind heretofore." In 1780, however, he again devoted his services to the state in the legislature of Delaware.

On the fifth of December, 1782, Mr. Read was appointed one of the judges of the court of appeals in admiralty cases. This appointment was announced to him in the most flattering manner, by Mr. Boudinot, then president of congress, and afterwards the venerable president of the Bible society, in a letter dated at Philadelphia on the following day.

"It gives me very particular satisfaction," he says, "to have the honour of presenting you the commission of the United States in congress assembled, whereby you are constituted one of the judges of the court of appeals in all cases of capture on the water.

"Your established character as a gentleman, lawyer, and man of integrity, leave me no room to doubt but this appointment will do honour to congress, produce the happiest consequences to the good citizens of these states, and, I hope, real satisfaction to yourself, from the consciousness of serving your country with fidelity."

His acceptance of this appointment was conveyed to Mr. Boudinot, in the following letter, dated at Newcastle on the tenth of December.

"Sir--I had the honour to receive your excellency's letter of the sixth instant, enclosing under its cover a commission to me from the United States of America in congress assembled, for a judge's place in their court of appeals.

"This unlooked for mark of confidence from that honourable body, impresses me with the strongest sense of gratitude, and I can only say that under this impression, I accept of this appointment with the fullest intention to discharge the duties thereof to the best of my poor abilities, and I hope with an integrity that may become the station. I am persuaded that in doing so, I shall m ke the best return in my power for the honour conferred, and the trust reposed in me by the great council of America.

"I beg leave to return your excellency my particular thanks for the very flattering and polite manner in which you have been pleased to communicate to me this appointment."

This office was filled by Mr. Read until the abolition of the court.

In January, 1785, he was appointed, by congress, one of the commissioners, who constituted a federal court created by that body, conformably with the petitions of the states of New York and Massachusetts, for the purpose of determining a controversy which had arisen, in relation to territory. In 1786, he was nominated, by the legislature of Delaware, as one of their delegates to Annapolis, to consult with commissioners from the other states, relative to the formation of a system of commercial regulations for the union. In 1787, he was a member of the convention which framed the constitution of the United States. Immediately after the adoption of the constitution, he was elected a member of the senate of the United States.

In 1792, the sentiments of Mr. Read in relation to the abilities and integrity of John Adams, of whom he entertained an exalted opinion, were fully developed in the following communication addressed to Gunning Bedford, who

married the only sister of Mr. Read, and was subsequently governor of the state of Delaware: it is dated at Philadelphia, on the thirtieth of November, 1792.

"Dear sir—Recollecting that on Wednesday next you meet your two colleagues as electors of president and vice-president of the United States, I have supposed that you would expect some information from me respecting Mr. Adams, the present vice-president, as to his conduct in the chair of the senate of the United States, since so much pains have been taken in the public prints of the present year, to raise a general prejudice against him, in expectation of preventing his re-election.

"It is but a piece of justice, due to Mr. Adams, for me to say that as chairman of the house of congress, of which I am a member from the Delaware state, his conduct at all times since his being placed there, hath appeared to me attentive, upright, fair, and unexceptionable, and his attendance at the daily meetings of the senate, uncommonly exact. As to his having abilities equal to that station, none of his detractors insinuate a want thereof, and any thing on that head from me must be unnecessary. His various political publications sufficiently evidence such ability.

"With respect to the objections to him, which I have heard or seen on paper, they principally existed previously to his former election, at which, you well know, his popularity was such as to induce a portion of electors in each state of the union to throw away their votes, (but not to be done now by those who wish his re-election,) by applying them to names not with a view to their return, but in order to secure the presidency to general Washington. The present change of sentiment, therefore, with respect to Mr. Adams, is not easy to be accounted for at a distance from the central scene. I have supposed the clamour raised against

Mr. Adams, to have proceeded from a personal dislike of an individual, contracted, perhaps, before the adoption of the present federal system; as well as from the general jealousy that such of the southern states as are most interested in the future seat of the federal government, entertain of the possibility, or probability, of its being changed through the influence of an eastern character, in high station.

"Some pretend an opinion that a rotation in office is a salutary thing in republican governments; but this has always appeared to me an insincere reason urged by those who use it; but this, perhaps, because my sentiments have, at all times, been uniformly otherwise; to wit: that when a fit character hath been selected for office, either by the people or by their executive authority, and he discovers such fitness by an able discharge of duty for a time, such person hath a reasonable claim to an after continuance in office; and I consider it as conducing to the interest of the community, for whom such officer acts, by means of the improved knowledge of the duties of office which he acquires.

"You may be assured that what I have before said as to Mr. Adams, hath not proceeded from any intimacy subsisting between us, for in the three past years, I have not been so many times in his residence, exclusive of the complimentary visit at the commencement of each session."

Mr. Read continued in the senate of the United States until September, 1793, when he was appointed chief justice of the supreme court of the state of Delaware. He performed the duties of this distinguished office with extraordinary ability and integrity, until the autumn of 1798, when his long life of public usefulness was terminated by a short and sudden illness.

It was especially as a judge that Mr. Read was distinguished; his dispassionate habits of reasoning, his patience in hearing, his deliberation in deciding, and the essential requisites of profound legal knowledge and deep experience which he possessed, enabled him to discharge the duties of his office with honour to himself, and advantage to the community. When he assumed the office of chief justice of the state of Delaware in 1793, there was a peculiar necessity for a judge of firmness and ability. The period of the revolution, and that which followed its close, were marked with perplexity and confusion. The courts of justice were, in some degree, closed, and the master-spirits of the age were to be found in the cabinet or the camp. Laws were silent amid the din of arms. It is unnecessary to enumerate the effects of such confusion upon contracts and upon rights; but the duty of the judge was little less than the re-organization of a legal system out of chaos. This arduous duty was performed by Mr. Read with his usual ability, and his decisions are still reverenced in the state of Delaware, as the great land-marks of the judiciary and of the profession.

We have now seen this eminent individual distinguishing himself at the bar as a lawyer: animating his fellow-citizens against oppression as a patriot: taking his seat in the national council as a sage; and presiding on the bench, as one of the judges of the land. In all these lofty stations, exposed to that strict and merciless scrutiny, to which, we trust, republicans will ever subject men in office, no blemish was discovered in his conduct. Applause at the bar did not, in him, generate vanity; success in political life, ambition; nor the dignity of the bench, dogmatism. As a lawyer, a patriot, a senator, and a judge, he was alike unpretending, consistent, dignified, and impartial. His other peculiar characteristics, were an inflexible integrity of motive; a slow and calm de-

liberation of his subject; a cool determination of purpose; and an invincible perseverance in the conclusions of his judgment.

Similar traits were prominent in the course of his private life, softened, however, by those social amenities which so delightfully relieve the sterner features of the patriot, and show us the statesman in the husband and the father. His manners were dignified, and his dignity may sometimes have bordered upon austerity. He avoided trifling occupations, disliked familiarity, and could not tolerate the slightest violation of good manners, for which he was himself distinguished. A strict and consistent moralist, he granted no indulgence to laxity of principle in others; and he was remarkably averse to that qualified dependence which an obligation necessarily produces. Notwithstanding an exact attention to his expenditure, which he never permitted to exceed his income, his pecuniary liberality was very extensive.

In his person, Mr. Read was above the middle size, erect, and dignified in his demeanour; and he was remarkable for attention to personal arrangements.

In fine, he was an excellent husband, a good father, an indulgent master, an upright judge, a fearless patriot, and a just man.

END OF VOLUME III.

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